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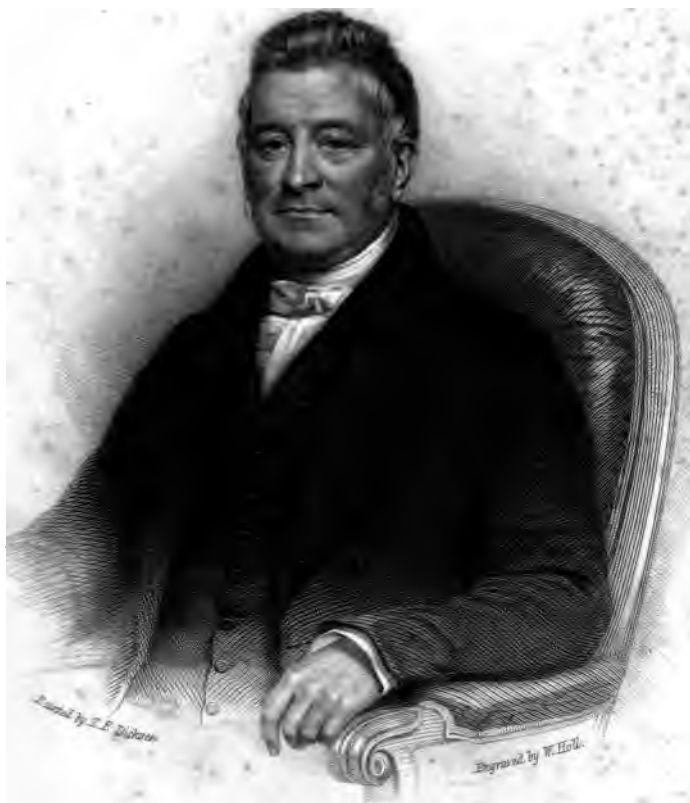


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History of the Sunday School Union.





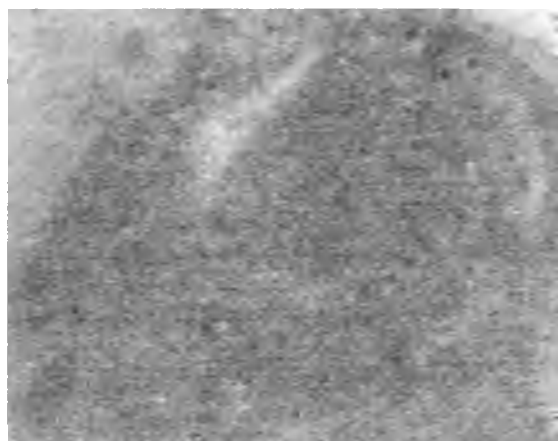
Yours most truly
W. B. Gurney

THE HISTORY
OF THE
SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION.

WILLIAM HENRY WARD.

London:
SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION,
15, PATERNOSTER ROW.
1853.

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
CHAPTER I.	
Introduction. Establishment of Sunday schools, by Robert Raikes. Formation of the "Society for the establishment and support of Sunday schools throughout the kingdom of Great Britain."	1
CHAPTER II.	
Formation of the Sunday School Union. Appointment of Officers. Sermons by Revds. G. Burder and J. Bunting. Mr. Gurney's resignation as Secretary. Appointment of Mr. Aspin. Introduction of Collective System. Resignation of Mr. J. Aspin, and appointment of Mr. W. F. Lloyd as Secretary	10
CHAPTER III.	
First Public Breakfast. First appearance of Teacher's Magazine. Formation of Auxiliary Unions. Constitution of Committee	21
CHAPTER IV.	
Publication of Teacher's Hymn Book. Appointment of Mr. Althans as Secretary. Establishment of Depository. Retirement of Mr. W. Marriott from Treasurership, and appointment of Mr. Butterworth.	31

CHAPTER V.

	PAGE
Introduction of Lord Brougham's Education Measure into Parliament. Its subsequent withdrawal. Appointment of Trustees to the Union.	38

CHAPTER VI.

Publication of Scholar's Hymn Book. Election of Mr. Butterworth as President, and appointment of Mr. David Niven as Treasurer. Removal of Depository to 19, Paternoster Row.	45
--	----

CHAPTER VII.

Sunday schools in Greece. Death of Mr. Butterworth. Appointment of Earl Roden as President. Removal of Depository to 5, Paternoster Row. Establishment of Sunday school Mission.	52
--	----

CHAPTER VIII.

Mr. Gall's System of Instruction. Its beneficial influence .	58
--	----

CHAPTER IX.

Deputations to Country Unions. Celebration of the first Sunday school Jubilee	68
---	----

CHAPTER X.

Death of Mr. Niven, and appointment of Mr. Gurney as Treasurer. Establishment of Library and Reading Room. Removal of Depository to 60, Paternoster Row. Commencement of Grants of Lending Libraries	78
--	----

CHAPTER XI.

PAGE

Publication of Tune Book. Introduction of Education Bill into Parliament by Lord Brougham, and its subsequent withdrawal. Resignation of Mr. Wilson as Sunday school Missionary. Opposition to Sunday Postal labour.	86
--	----

CHAPTER XII.

Increased usefulness of Library and Reading Room. Additional publications.	95
--	----

CHAPTER XIII.

Death of Mr. Olding. Revision of Scholar's Hymn Book. Introduction of the sale of Boxes of Moveable Letters. Proceedings as to the small attendance of Scholars at Morning School.	106
--	-----

CHAPTER XIV.

National Education question. Successful opposition to the Education Bill introduced into Parliament. Resignation of Mr. Lloyd	113
---	-----

CHAPTER XV.

Visits of Committee to Country Unions. Commencement of Union Magazine for Sunday school Teachers. Revision of Teacher's Hymn Book. Discontinuance of sale of Denominational Catechisms. Publication of improved editions of Class Books.	131
--	-----

	PAGE
CHAPTER XVI.	
Celebration of Sunday School Jubilee at Halifax. Prize Essay ; publication of "The Sunday School." . . .	143
CHAPTER XVII.	
Publication of Bible Class Magazine. Death of Mr. Edward Thomas. Opposition to Sunday Post Office labour. Increase of Library.	155
CHAPTER XVIII.	
Death of Mr. John Holiday. Sunday school gathering at Salford, on the occasion of Her Majesty's visit. Appointment of Mr. Gurney as President, on the resignation of the Earl Roden ; and appointment of Mr. Alderman Challis as Treasurer. Commencement of "Child's Own Magazine." Opposition to the opening of the Crystal Palace on Sundays. Formation of a Sunday school Society at Paris. The Jubilee movement.	168
CHAPTER XIX.	
Review of the past labours of the Union. Conclusion.	182

~~~~~

**DIRECTIONS FOR PLACING THE PLATES.**

|                                                       |                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| W. B. GURNEY, FOUNDER OF SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION. . . . . | <i>To face Title.</i> |
| R. RAIKES, FOUNDER OF SUNDAY SCHOOLS. . . . .         | <i>Page 1.</i>        |
| W. FOX, FOUNDER OF SUNDAY SCHOOL SOCIETY. . . . .     | " 8.                  |
| JUBILEE MEDALS. . . . .                               | " 71.                 |
| W. F. LLOYD. . . . .                                  | " 129.                |





SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION





# HISTORY

OF THE

## SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION.

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### CHAPTER I.

AMONG the various subjects which occupy the attention of the reflecting mind, there is, perhaps, no one more interesting than that which refers to the origin and gradual progress of events in the natural, the political, and the moral world. We behold the mighty river rolling its ample flood towards the ocean : in its course, it beautifies and fertilizes the land through which it passes : by its agency, that which would otherwise be a barren desert is converted into a fruitful field, and furnishes food for millions both of man and beast. The traveller, anxious to examine the spring from whence this blessing proceeds, traces the stream upwards to its source ; and, after a long and painful journey, his curiosity is gratified. He then perceives how apparently insignificant in its early course is the stream, which, widening as it proceeds, at length confers blessings so varied and extensive.

Such also is the feeling with which we examine the progress of a mighty empire, that overruns the whole civilized world, and brings almost every known nation

principally employed in the pin manufactory, chiefly resided. The man whom he went to hire was from home ; and while waiting for his return, he was greatly disturbed by a troop of wretched, noisy boys, who interrupted him, as he conversed with the man's wife on the business he came about. He inquired whether those children belonged to that part of the town, and lamented their misery and idleness. "Ah! sir," said the woman, "could you take a view of this part of the town on Sunday, you would be shocked indeed ; for then the street is filled with multitudes of these wretches, who, released on that day from employment, spend their time in noise and riot, playing at chuck, and cursing and swearing in a manner so horrid as to convey to any serious mind an idea of hell rather than any other place." This conversation suggested to Robert Raikes—for he was the individual—the idea of attempting to stop this profanation of the Lord's day : the word "try" was so powerfully impressed on his mind as to decide him at once to action ; and many years afterwards he remarked to Joseph Lancaster, "I can never pass by the spot where the word 'try' came so powerfully into my mind, without lifting up my hands and heart to heaven in gratitude to God for having put such a thought into my head."

The particular mode adopted by Mr. Raikes to accomplish his object was as follows. Having found four persons who had been accustomed to instruct children in reading, he engaged to pay them one shilling each, for receiving and instructing such children as he should send to them every Sunday. The children were to come

soon after ten in the morning, and stay till twelve; they were then to go home, and return at one; and, after reading a lesson, they were to be conducted to church. After church, they were to be employed in repeating the Catechism till half-past five, and then to be dismissed, with an injunction to go home quietly, and by no means to make a noise in the street.

Such was the humble commencement of the Sunday School system. The contrast between the school just described, and a well-conducted school of the present day, is so great, that the resemblance can scarcely be perceived. We look in vain for the infant class, designed to convey even to babes the elements of religious knowledge: we fear there could not be any systematic instruction in the Scriptures imparted to the children more advanced in age; much less should we expect to find, in these early efforts, any provision for the instruction of youths growing up into manhood. The pious and enlightened superintendent and secretary, with their devoted band of voluntary and gratuitous teachers, were also wanting; nor would the most diligent inquiry have discovered a lending library attached to any of these schools, for the use of the scholars during the week.

Still the effect produced by these efforts was considerable. Mr. Raikes states, in a letter to Colonel Townley, a gentleman in Lancashire, who had made inquiries relative to these new institutions—"It is now three years since we began; and I wish you were here, to make inquiry into the effect. A woman who lives in a lane where I had fixed a school, told me, some time



ago, that the place was quite a heaven upon Sundays, compared to what it used to be. The numbers who have learned to read, and say their catechism, are so great that I am astonished at it. Upon the Sunday afternoon the mistresses take their scholars to church, —a place into which neither they nor their ancestors ever entered with a view to the glory of God. But what is more extraordinary, within this month these little ragamuffins have in great numbers taken it into their heads to frequent the early morning prayers which are held every morning at the cathedral, at seven o'clock. I believe there were near fifty this morning. They assemble at the house of one of the mistresses, and walk before her to church, two and two, in as much order as a company of soldiers."

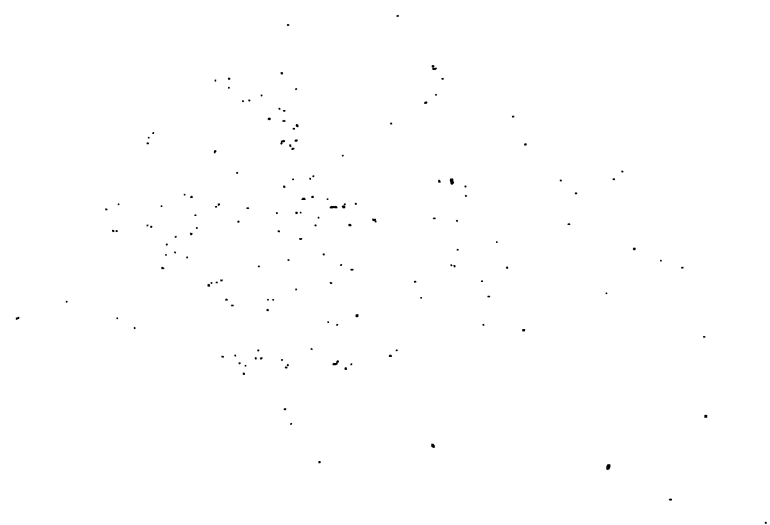
The position of Mr. Raikes, as proprietor and printer of the "Gloucester Journal," enabled him to make public this new scheme of benevolence; and a notice inserted in that paper, on Nov. 3, 1783, having been copied into the London papers, attention was soon drawn to the subject. The application we have referred to from Colonel Townley was one of the results; and, at his request, the letter of Mr. Raikes in answer, from which we have made an extract, was inserted in the "Gentleman's Magazine" for 1784. Thus the idea of Sunday Schools was widely diffused, and several were opened in various parts of the kingdom.

They did not maintain their position, however, in Gloucester, for in a very short time after Mr. Raikes went to his rest, Sunday Schools in the city of Gloucester became entirely extinct. But it so happened, in the

providence of God, about the year 1810, that six young men, impressed with the necessity and value of such institutions, banded themselves together, and resolved, in the strength of the Almighty, that they would revive the good work there. They applied to their minister for leave to do so. "No," he said, "the children will make too much noise." They then applied to the trustees of the chapel. "No," they said, "the children will soil the place, so that we cannot let you have it." They applied to the members of the church to rally round them. "No," they said, "you will find no children, no teachers, and no money to pay expenses." But these six young men, intent upon their work, were not to be thus discouraged. Accordingly they met around a post, at the corner of a lane, within twenty yards of the spot where Hooper was martyred, and there, taking each other by the hand, they solemnly resolved that, come what would, Sunday Schools should be re-established in the city of Gloucester. Accordingly they entered into a subscription amongst themselves, and although all the money they could raise was fifteen shillings, with that they set to work, and formed the first school, with unpaid teachers, in that locality. Five of these young men have long since gone to their reward, the sixth still survives in the person of the Rev. John Adey, pastor of the Congregational Church, Parish-street, Horsleydown, Southwark. That illustrious lady, the late Countess of Huntingdon, appreciated the value of these institutions, for, by her will, and prior to the re-establishment of Sunday Schools in Gloucester, she provided that the premises adjoining

the chapel there, should be devoted to the purposes of a Sunday School, if ever the zeal and love of the members of the church meeting there should lead to the formation of one.

In the year 1785, William Fox, Esq., formerly a merchant in London, and afterwards of Lechlade, in Gloucestershire, feeling deeply interested in the general education of the poor, and believing that this new system afforded the means of promoting this object, obtained the co-operation of several individuals who were like-minded; and, after a correspondence with Mr. Raikes on the subject, succeeded in forming, on the 7th Sept. 1785, the "Society for the Establishment and Support of Sunday Schools throughout the Kingdom of Great Britain." Mr. Jonas Hanway, Mr. Henry Thornton, and Mr. Samuel Hoare, who became treasurer, co-operated in the formation of this new institution; and it immediately received considerable encouragement and support. In the first report of the committee, in January, 1786, they stated that they had established five schools in the neighbourhood of London, and had received subscriptions to the amount of £987. 0s. 6d. At the meeting at which this report was presented, letters approving the object of the Society were read from the Bishops of Salisbury and Llandaff. The Bishop of Chester (Dr. Porteus) also recommended the formation of Sunday Schools in his extensive diocese. The poet Cowper, in a letter to the Rev. John Newton, dated Sept. 24, 1784, and the Rev. J. Wesley, in a letter to the Rev. Richard Rodda, Chester, dated June







*Engraved by Freeman, from an original painting.*

Dear Sir your very affectionate  
Friend &      *William Fox*  
Founder of the Sunday School Society.



17, 1785, also stated their conviction of the benefits to be expected from these schools.

The great impediment to the prosperity of these new institutions was the expense of hiring teachers. It appears that, from 1786 to 1800, the Sunday School Society alone paid upwards of £4,000 for this purpose. At Stockport, in 1784, the teachers were paid 1*s.* 6*d.* every Sunday for their services: but by degrees gratuitous teachers arose; so that, in 1794, out of nearly thirty, six only were hired: the rest voluntarily put themselves under the direction of the visitors. The beneficial effects were soon apparent; and from that time the number of scholars and teachers, and the amount of subscriptions, regularly increased. In a few years hired teachers were wholly relinquished in the Stockport school.

It is not necessary to trace with minuteness the progress of the Sunday School system. It soon found its way into Wales and Scotland; and gradually the system of hiring gave way almost universally to the employment of gratuitous teachers; by which means a great obstacle to the extension of the system was removed. To remunerate the present number of teachers, at the rate paid to those in the Stockport school, of 1*s.* 6*d.* each Sunday, would amount, if the number of teachers be estimated at 250,000, to the sum of £975,000 per annum.



CHAPTER II.

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AMONGST those who devoted themselves to the gratuitous instruction of the rising generation at an early period, were found Mr. Joseph Fox the intimate friend of Joseph Lancaster, and Mr. William Brodie Gurney. These two gentlemen were united in conducting a Sunday-school at Walworth, established in 1793, and taught by the master of the day school with which it was connected. He was paid for his services on the Lord's day at the rate of a penny per head up to the number of thirty; but the payment was not to exceed the half-crown. The result was, that the number was always thirty, a lad being sent out to fetch in one or two if it fell short; but it was never exceeded, except by accident. Mr. Fox and Mr. Gurney, with two friends, took the school out of his hands in 1796; and under the care of gratuitous teachers it increased to 180 children, for whose accommodation it became necessary to erect a new school-room.

It was natural that these teachers should seek to improve the quality of the instruction given to the young persons thus gathered together, and they were stimulated and guided in this by the interest which Mr. Gurney's sister took in the "Missionary Magazine,"

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which was commenced in Edinburgh in the year 1796. That lady was a frequent contributor to that publication, and sometimes employed Mr. Gurney as her amanuensis. He was thus brought acquainted with the mode pursued in the schools of Scotland of catechising on the scriptures, and also with Elliott's "Scripture Catechism," and other works intended to aid beginners in adopting it. He introduced the plan into the Sunday school. Mr. Gurney was not aware that such a mode of instruction, and which is now happily so universal, had then been introduced into any school; but he found its adoption attended with the most beneficial results. While the minds of the scholars were imbued with the knowledge of the scriptures, they also contracted a habit of reading the sacred volume, which had its influence long after they left the school.

In the year 1802, Mr. William Marriott, who was engaged in conducting a Sunday school at Friar's Mount, Bethnal Green, was introduced to Mr Gurney, who had then become connected with a society established at Walworth for opening schools in the neighbouring villages. They both found reason to lament the want of plan and order, and desired some means by which neglected districts might be supplied with schools, and young persons of suitable dispositions induced to undertake the work. On the removal of Mr. Gurney into London, early in 1803, his house became the place of meeting for several active Sunday school teachers, amongst whom were Messrs. Beams, Burchett, Niven, Weare, &c.; and at one of these meetings the subject

of inducing the teachers in London to unite for their mutual encouragement and support, and with a view to the extension and improvement of Sunday schools, was made a matter of conversation; and its practicability and desirableness becoming apparent, it was determined to call a meeting to consider the subject more at large, and adopt measures for carrying it into execution. Accordingly, a numerous meeting assembled at Surrey chapel school-rooms, the 13th July, 1803, when THE SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION was formed.

The Union was designed to consist of teachers and others actively engaged in some protestant Sunday school. Its objects were declared to be—1st. To stimulate and encourage each other in the education and religious instruction of children and youth;—2ndly. By mutual communication to aim at improving each other's method of instruction; and 3rdly. To promote the opening of new schools by influence and personal assistance, whenever it might be deemed expedient. Mr. Marriott was appointed the treasurer; and Mr. Gurney, secretary. The only survivors of the band who, animated by love to the Saviour and to the souls of the young, thus met together, are Mr. Gurney, Mr. James Nisbet, and Mr. Thomas Thompson; and it is a pleasing circumstance, and one which correctly marks the catholic character of the institution, that these three survivors should represent, respectively, three important sections of the Christian Church.

A committee was also elected to carry out the objects of the society, who proceeded to prepare and publish—  
A Plan for the Establishment and Regulation of Sunday

Schools—An Introduction to Reading, in two parts—A Catechism in verse, entitled *Milk for Babes*—and a select List of Scriptures, designed as a guide to teachers for a course of reading in Sunday schools. The two first of these publications were prepared by Messrs. Marriott and Gurney; the *Milk for Babes* by Mr. J. Neale; and Mr. John Heard, now Alderman of Nottingham, who has ever continued his interest in the cause of Sunday schools, assisted in the preparation of the select List of Scriptures. The *Youth's Magazine* also originated in the committee of the Union, but they did not feel it prudent to undertake the responsibility, as they had no funds to meet the loss, in case it should not succeed; and it was undertaken at the risk of some members of the committee, who have devoted the whole of the profits (about £4000) to objects connected with the diffusion of scriptural truth, in which donations the Union has largely shared. This work has been eminently useful.

Pursuant to one of the rules, a sermon was annually preached to the members of the Union: that in 1804 by the Rev. George Burder, at the City-road chapel; and that in 1805 by Mr. (now Dr.) Bunting, in Newcourt chapel, from *Nehem. vi. 3*—"I am doing a great work." The latter excited great interest. It was printed, and went through three editions, the circulation of which was very beneficial. It was so clear and cogent that it produced immediate effect.

The following affords an interesting illustration:—

A gentleman travelling into the country on business, shortly after this sermon was printed, took one in his

pocket. In a town he passed through, where there was no Sunday school, he called on a lady who, as he heard, laid herself out for usefulness, and suggested the importance of instituting one. Various difficulties were started, which he endeavoured to remove, and at parting put into her hands the printed sermon. He called for it by appointment in the afternoon, when she informed him that, after reading that sermon, she could no longer hesitate; that she had accordingly been round to several of her poor neighbours to invite their children to attend the next morning; and (opening the door into the room next to that in which they were sitting) she showed him that she had already furnished it with such forms as she could procure. A Sunday school was thus speedily established.

The first and second objects of the Union, namely, the stimulating and encouraging each other in the education and religious instruction of the young, and by mutual communication improving the methods of instruction, were also sought to be carried out by holding quarterly meetings open to all Sunday school teachers; when the Reports of the schools connected with the Union and the proceedings of the committee were read—interesting instances of usefulness—improved plans of instruction—and any information calculated to promote the objects of the Union were mentioned, and occasionally, questions previously appointed, relative to Sunday schools, were considered and discussed.

The increasing pressure of professional engagements, and the failure of health, having compelled Mr. Gurney

to resign the office of secretary, it was filled for a short time by Mr. John Edwards and Mr. John Heard. They were succeeded by Mr. J. Aspin, a teacher in the Clerkenwell parochial schools.

In the year 1810, the attention of the Union was occupied by the new modes of instruction introduced by Mr. Joseph Lancaster, with a view to ascertain to what extent they could be made available in Sunday schools. At the request of the committee, Mr. Lancaster delivered a lecture in Silver-street chapel, on the mode of collective teaching recommended by him. At the quarterly general meeting in April of that year, it was resolved that at the general meeting in July, the propriety of introducing into Sunday schools Mr. Lancaster's plan of teaching children to read by means of spelling and writing on slates, should be fully discussed. The subject was accordingly brought forward; and in the course of the discussion it was announced that such a plan had been adopted in the Sunday school of Sion chapel during the preceding four months, and that the children were found to make very considerable progress in the first principles of the art of spelling and reading, though many teachers had, in consequence, seceded from the institution. At the close of the discussion, the following proposition was put to the meeting, and carried by a majority of one vote:—"That it be recommended to the teachers in the schools connected with this Union not to adopt Mr. Lancaster's plan on Lord's day; the same being considered as a breach of the sanctity of that day."

Though the practice of writing on the Lord's day was

thus objected to, many teachers felt disposed to avail themselves of the improvements suggested by Mr. Lancaster in the mode of teaching to read. In order to this, a set of lessons for pasting on boards, was prepared by the teachers connected with the Clerkenwell parochial Sunday Schools, and sold for the benefit of that institution. These lessons, under the name of the Clerkenwell Lessons, obtained an extensive circulation.

In the year 1810, the committee were strongly urged to publish the lessons of their two Spelling and Reading Books on sheets. It was stated that it was impossible to use the collective system with books merely; and that many teachers being unwilling to exclude books which they so highly esteemed, were delaying the introduction of the plan, in the hope that the committee would publish the lessons on sheets. Books could be lent to the children for use, at home, and thus the lessons they learned at school might be beneficial to their families, as well as to themselves. A sub-committee was therefore appointed to prepare for publication a set of lessons for collective teaching from the First Spelling Book of the Society. This was the first step taken by the committee towards the introduction of the collective system of teaching; to which, in subsequent years, they have devoted continued and anxious attention, deeply convinced as they are that it is calculated to make the attainment of the art of reading more easy for the scholar, to relieve the teacher of much labour, and to afford time and opportunities for imparting religious instruction. Great, however, as are the advantages of the system, and much as the knowledge

of it has been extended, its use has not yet become universal.


The discussions connected with this subject, and the decision to which the committee came, induced Mr. Aspin to resign the office of secretary. His place was supplied by Mr. William Freeman Lloyd, a young man of nineteen, who had already given strong evidence of his attachment to Sunday School labours. He was the son of a cloth manufacturer at Uley, in Gloucestershire, where he was born on the 22nd of December, 1791. His father was a deacon of the Independent church there, and his mother descended from a long line of pious ancestors; among them the Rev. Joshua Head, one of the ejected ministers. He was educated at Oxford, by the late Rev. James Hinton, from whose pious counsels he derived much spiritual advantage. In his fifteenth year, he commenced the employment of a Sunday School teacher, by assisting in the instruction of a junior class of scholars at Oxford. Removing shortly afterwards to London, he still adhered to the work in which he had engaged, and joined some individuals, of a kindred spirit, who had opened a Sunday School in the degraded neighbourhood of Saffron Hill. He afterwards established another at Haberdashers' Hall. Towards the close of the year 1808, Mr. Lloyd became a member of the Rev. Dr. Winter's church, in New Court, Carey Street, London. He still continued his former Sunday School labours, while he expressed his regret that no such institution was connected with the church of which he had just become a member. After some time, he brought the subject be-



fore his minister and fellow members. It was instantly taken into consideration, and so warmly supported, that on the 3rd of December, 1809, the New Court Sunday School was opened. Though young in years, yet, having had some previous acquaintance with the nature and management of these institutions, he was requested by those friends with whom he was now associated, to undertake the offices of superintendent and secretary, and to which desire, on their part, he acceded.

It was on the 19th Dec. 1810, that Mr. Lloyd was requested to undertake the office of secretary of the Sunday School Union: to the duties of which he immediately devoted himself with an untiring energy, from which the Union and its associated schools have derived the most extensive benefit.

In this year, the committee were solicited to grant assistance towards the carrying on of Sunday schools established in the West India Islands. At St. George's, Bermuda, a school had been established, containing eighty children, mostly blacks; at St. John's, Antigua, two schools, one containing 100, and the other 650 scholars. The committee made grants of books to these schools; but finding their means inadequate to meet the demands which would thus come upon the funds, they induced the Sunday School Society to extend assistance to the colonies of this kingdom. As, however, the rules of that institution confined their grants to copies of the Scriptures, and reading and spelling books, the committee of the Union found ample room for their liberality, which they have freely exercised. It is impossible to recall the



early efforts made by the Moravian Brethren and the Methodists, for the religious instruction of the young in the island of Antigua, without rejoicing at the testimony afforded to its value. When by the emancipation act, slavery was exchanged for apprenticeship, the planters of Antigua were so well satisfied with their generally educated slaves, that they declared their willingness to set them wholly free ; and the system of apprenticeship was never introduced into that island.

The example of the teachers of London in associating for mutual encouragement and support, was followed, in 1810, by the teachers of Nottingham and Hampshire ; and since that time, similar Unions have been formed in various parts of this country, as well as in foreign lands, with the most beneficial results. It is unnecessary to enumerate these results : but it is desirable to advert to the nature of the connexion of these societies with the Sunday School Union, upon which some misapprehension has existed. That connexion does not involve anything in the shape of subjection. They are entirely independent bodies : and while the Union desires to do all in its power to encourage and assist them, it does not claim any right to exercise authority over them.

In 1811, a Hymn Book for the use of Sunday schools was deemed necessary, and the committee requested the gentlemen who had undertaken the Youth's Magazine, to consider whether they would not take the responsibility of this book also. It does not, however, appear that anything was done in consequence of this recommendation ; and although the subject was considered by

the committee in the two following years, it seems to have been afterwards lost sight of.

It will be perceived from the previous statements, that the proceedings of the Union up to this time had been very much of a private character. Its meetings were not calculated to excite public attention, and its operations had been exceedingly limited. The endeavour to promote a taste for useful reading among the young had been thrown upon private individuals, to whom it was also sought to transfer the duty of preparing the means of cultivating a devotional spirit amongst Sunday scholars.

The only publications of the Union up to this time were the elementary books which have been already mentioned; the large circulation of which must have been greatly beneficial in assisting teachers in their work. Great good had also attended the quarterly meetings of the Society which were held in various parts of London—at Surrey chapel, City-road chapel, Sion chapel, and Chapel-street, Soho, and occasionally at other places. The reports read and the discussions conducted at these meetings excited attention, encouraged and instructed teachers, and led to the establishment of many new schools, as well as to the improvement of existing schools. Previously to the formation of the Union, one school in a district for several congregations was thought sufficient; but subsequently the feeling was diffused, that each congregation should have a school for itself—thus creating a demand for additional teachers, which the proceedings of the Union greatly assisted in meeting.

## CHAPTER III.

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THE Union having thus quietly pursued its course for a period of nearly nine years, it was, in the year 1812, thought by the committee, that the time had arrived for making its proceedings more public. Accordingly, it was determined to invite the teachers and friends of Sunday schools to a public breakfast, on the morning of Wednesday, May 13th, at the New London Tavern, Cheapside. Breakfast was provided, at seven o'clock, for two hundred; and the meeting excited great interest. Mr. Marriott, the treasurer, presided; and after the Rev. Richard Watson had implored the Divine blessing, a report of the proceedings of the Union, from its formation, was read. From that report it appeared that the following had been its only publications:—

A Plan for the Establishment and Regulation of Sunday Schools; of which one edition had been printed.

An Introduction to Reading, part the first; of which 150,000 copies had been printed.

The same, in a series of Lessons for Collective Teaching.

An Introduction to Reading, part the second; of which 85,000 copies had been printed.

A Catechism in verse, entitled, *Milk for Babes*; of which 38,000 had been printed.

A Select List of Scriptures, designed as a Guide to Teachers for a Course of Reading in Sunday Schools.

The first resolution submitted to the meeting was moved by Mr. T. H. Horne, author of the Introduction to the Critical Study of the Scriptures, now the rector of St. Edmund the King, and prebendary of St. Paul's; and seconded by the Rev. Legh Richmond, the author of the *Dairyman's Daughter*. There were some sentiments contained in the address of this devoted minister of Christ which deserve to be recorded, as showing the principles upon which the Union was founded, and upon which its successive committees had endeavoured to carry on its operations. He said, "I confess it to be no small inducement to me, in delivering my sentiments on this occasion, that I see the word 'Union' in the title of the Society. Union, in all those points wherein we can conscientiously and consistently agree, appears to be the great secret, now at length happily discovered, for bringing into effect, and into prosperous co-operation, the hearts, the hands, and all the combined energies of the men of God. I feel particularly thankful that a plan has been discovered, by which ministers and other christians may labour together with so much affectionate exertion, and that, frequently, with prospects of the greatest success, in the first of national objects, the introduction of our British youth to the knowledge of the religion of Christ. My dear brethren, *unite earnestly in the work*. May the Sunday School Union prove a union of affection, and a union of opinions, as

far as you can possibly unite, (and God forbid that we should endeavour to find out how much we can possibly differ). May there be a union of those general principles, which shall make the church of God strong and united, in the exertions of its most enlightened and zealous members. It is my firm belief—or I would never wish to address a meeting, consisting, as this does, of persons of different denominations—that the happiest event of the century which has now commenced, is the growing disposition among Christians of various names and denominations, to unite in great and glorious undertakings. I have heard the arguments of the prejudiced on this question, I have read the observations of the worldly wise upon it; but the more I have heard and read them, the more have I seen that the foolishness, as it may be called, of christian charity, is confounding the policy of the wise men of this world. There must be some circumstances take place, as forerunners of the latter day glory; there must be something come to pass, by which the divisions, heart-burnings, and jealousies, which have too long prevailed among us, may be brought to a close. A miracle to effect this, we have no reason to expect; it must advance gradually: nor do I think there is anything fanciful in believing that that work is now accomplishing; not by the nominal, but by the real union of hearts, engaged in so many grand and beneficial undertakings. I have happily experienced some of the most delightful moments of my life, in the enjoyment of that brotherly communication with fellow christians of other denominations, which, though at a former period of my life I thought highly desirable, yet I confess I did

not expect to see so speedily brought into frequent and cordial existence. I can speak for myself, and I am sure I can speak in the name of many of my brethren in the church of England, in testimony of the pleasure which we have derived, from finding that those who had been accustomed to think themselves at a great distance from each other, are at length, through the influence of a sort of spiritual central attraction, if I may call it so, brought to love one another, and almost to wonder that they feel so affectionately and so nearly allied. We compromise no principles of conscientious attachment to our own views of church doctrine or discipline ourselves; neither do we expect this from others. But there is something in union for christian and benevolent purposes, which acts like a talisman on the heart, and elicits its best and noblest affections, that they may be consecrated at the foot of the cross of Christ. By this means, a thousand half explained or ill explained sources of difference and disputation among us gradually lose their former importance, and we are mutually become willing to consign them to oblivion."

The second resolution was moved by Mr. Thomas James, who had been secretary of the Hampshire Union, and who afterwards entered into the ministry, and is now the secretary of the Colonial Missionary Society; and was seconded by the Rev. G. Thom. The remaining speakers were, Mr. Benjamin Neale, the superintendent of Surrey Chapel School; the Rev. Mr. Frey; Mr. Gurney, and the Rev. Alexander Fletcher.

It will thus be seen, that this first public meeting of the Union exhibited a delightful exemplification of

christian love ; and it has been the desire of the various committees, that each succeeding meeting should preserve the same character. It is to be feared, however, that the anticipation indulged in by Mr. Richmond, and arising from the warm affections of his heart, was too sanguine, and that christian union has not made the progress which he desired and expected. The difficulty of conducting a united society has been found recently to increase, in consequence of the eagerness with which all religious parties seek the promotion of their peculiar views. In the conflict thus created, christian union is necessarily endangered ; but should not every effort be made “ to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace ? ”


The annual breakfast was removed in 1815 to the City of London Tavern, in Bishopsgate-street, where it continued to be held until the year 1832. The attendance largely increased ; until at length it exceeded 1,200. The hour for breakfast, was altered to six ; but the anxiety to be present rendered it necessary to anticipate the hour ; and between four and five in the morning, east, west, north, and south, groups of young, light-hearted youths and maidens were seen bending their way to Bishopsgate-street, to the wonderment of the frequenters of the London markets, who could not imagine why such an unwonted addition was so suddenly made to the early London population. Before five o'clock so great a crowd had assembled round the doors of the tavern, that it became necessary to throw them open for the admission of the people ; and, by the time stated for the commencement of breakfast,



that meal had been disposed of. The large room was crammed with an audience not over patient, and as soon as the chairman had arrived and had taken some refreshment, the proceedings commenced. No doubt the recollection of those who used to attend will vary according to the impression made on their minds, but few will forget the opening psalm—

“From all that dwell below the skies,”

invariably sung to the same tune, Denbigh, and which seemed never to be so well sung anywhere else ; nor the bluff form of Joseph Butterworth, Esq., M.P. for Coventry, once the treasurer, and afterwards the president of the Union ; nor John Bunyan's successor, Mr. Hillyard, of Bedford, who invariably attended, and as certainly brought with him his great predecessor, to add interest to the meeting. Nor can the Rev. James Upton, of Church-street, Blackfriars, be forgotten, whose early rising habits rendered his attendance at such a meeting no difficulty. There are some who will remember the notice given by the committee, that in consequence of the large attendance, ladies could not be admitted ; they will be still able to realize the good-natured face of Mr. Upton, when, in his address, he adverted to this prohibition, saying, “At an early hour this morning, my granddaughters came to my door and said, ‘Grandfather, are you not getting up, to go with us to the Union?’ ‘But they will not let you in, my dears.’ ‘Well, we will try ; we will go and see if they will shut us out.’” The result might be easily foretold,—the ladies triumphed. The



committee got laughed at for their want of gallantry, and no attempt was afterwards made to enforce the rule.

The circumstances under which those annual breakfasts—which are looked back to with feelings of much interest by all who attended them—were at length discontinued, belong to a subsequent period in the history of the Union.

On the 1st January, 1813, appeared the first number of the “Sunday School Repository ; or, Teacher’s Magazine ;” a work which was originated, and carried on for many years, by Mr. Lloyd, with much arduous labour. He submitted a prospectus of the proposed publication to the committee of the Union in the previous April, under the title of “The Sunday School Teacher’s Magazine.” That prospectus was examined by Mr. Stephen Warner and Mr. Edward Thomas, members of the committee, in conjunction with Mr. Lloyd ; and 500 copies of it were ordered to be printed, and circulated at the breakfast of which an account has just been given. This appears to have been the only official notice the committee took of the work. This magazine has been continued for a period of forty years, while other periodicals on the subject of education have appeared and disappeared in rapid succession. It has obtained a respectable circulation, and is conferring great good on the Sunday school cause : but its circulation ought to be largely increased, considering the increased number of teachers ; and, the necessity that exists for their self-improvement.

At this period it was considered desirable, that instead of the officers and committee being elected at the

quarterly meeting in July of each year, they should be elected at the annual meeting in May; which was done accordingly. Amongst the members then elected, is found the name of Mr. William Jones, now the corresponding secretary and superintendent of the Religious Tract Society. In September of that year, Mr. Richard Jones was appointed secretary with Mr. Lloyd. Writing copies, taken from Scripture, were published by the committee, during this year.

At the close of the year, the attention of the committee was much occupied with the question, as to the manner in which the Union could be made more beneficial. A conference between them and the superintendents of Sunday schools was held on the 3rd December, at the New London Tavern, at which about ninety persons attended. The proceedings of this conference were reported to the committee on the 15th December: when it was resolved,—“That it is desirable to form district unions of schools, for the purpose of more fully carrying out the objects of this Society.” In pursuance of this resolution, the Southwark Auxiliary Union (the title of which was afterwards changed to that of the South London) was formed, on the 9th March, 1814—the East London Auxiliary, about the same time—the West London, on the 7th September, 1814—and the Central, or North London, (which was afterwards designated the North London,) on the 23rd November, 1814.

The formation of these auxiliaries rendered some changes necessary in the regulations, which were adopted by the general meeting, in May, 1814; and by which the committees of these new societies were allowed,

each to send three representatives to the committee of the Union. At a subsequent period, a farther alteration was made, by which the minute secretary and three representatives from each of the auxiliary unions were constituted members of the committee.

It is necessary to observe that the relation of these unions to the parent society is very different from that of the unions formed in various parts of the country. It has been already observed, that the latter are entirely independent bodies; that while the London Union is desirous, as far as lies in its power, to render them assistance in carrying out their objects, it claims no authority over them, and incurs no responsibility for their acts. But the four London unions, whose formation has just been narrated, are strictly auxiliary: they form part of the General Union, and are designed to carry out some of its objects. It is on this ground that they send their secretary and representatives to its committee, and thus share in its government; and as the general committee must incur responsibility for their proceedings, it is manifest that those proceedings should be in accordance with the determinations of that committee. It is gratifying to state, that this system has borne the test of nearly forty years' trial, and has been found to work well. It might have been expected that differences of opinion would frequently arise between the general committee and the committees of the auxiliaries, as to the best mode of carrying out the objects of the Union; but this has not been the case; an almost uninterrupted harmony has prevailed during this lengthened period, and, it is trusted, will still

prevail, notwithstanding all the conflict of opinion which is now stirred up on every hand. The general committee has, from time to time, devolved on the committees of the auxiliaries the carrying out many of the objects of the Union—such as the watching over and assisting the connected schools, the quarterly meetings of the teachers, and has principally confined itself to the preparation of books calculated to aid teachers in their work, and to the promotion of Sunday schools in this and other countries. By this division of labour the work has been better accomplished.

The means by which this harmony of feeling and exertion has been preserved has been, under the Divine blessing, the thoroughly representative character of the general committee, by which it has faithfully embodied the views of its constituents.

The committee consists (exclusively of the officers) of thirty-six members. Of these, sixteen are the minute secretaries and representatives of the four London auxiliaries; over the choice of whom, neither the committee nor the general meeting of the Union has the slightest control. The committees of the auxiliaries, consisting of representatives from the various schools connected with them, choose from amongst themselves the three who shall be sent to form a part of the general committee. The remaining twenty members are elected at the annual meeting: but the vacancies in this number are usually supplied from those who join the committee as representatives; and thus even the elected members are, generally speaking, those who have been, in the first instance, sent by the London auxiliaries.

CHAPTER IV.

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IN the month of May, 1814, Mr. Thomas Thompson joined the committee; and at the same time, Mr. Henry Althans was introduced, as secretary to the newly-formed East London Auxiliary, and took that seat, which he has usefully and honourably filled up to the present period. In the course of the year, the Third Part Spelling Book, consisting entirely of words for spelling lessons, was added to the publications of the Society.

In the following year, Mr. John Edwards being appointed joint secretary of the committee, with an especial view to his superintending the printing and book department, accepted office in the month of July; but resigned in December following, under "a full conviction," as he states in his letter of resignation, "that the nature and extent of its duties are much too great to be properly discharged by any gentleman of your committee, without such a sacrifice of time as cannot reasonably be expected from any individual whatsoever." The sales of the Society's publications at this time, amounted to about £1000 per annum.

A Hymn-book for teachers was published by the committee, in the year 1816. At the annual meeting

Mr. John Wheelton, who has since served the honourable office of sheriff of London, was elected on the committee. In the month of November, in this year, Mr. Thomas Challis, now Lord Mayor for the city of London and Member of Parliament for the borough of Finsbury, as well as Treasurer to the Union, was reported to the committee as secretary to the North London Auxiliary, in which capacity for some time he attended its meetings.

The principal events of the year 1817 were, the appointment of Mr. Althans as secretary; the election of Joseph Butterworth, Esq., M.P., as a member of the committee; the alteration of the night for the committee meeting to the third Friday in the month, which has not been since varied; and the publication of two sets of Lessons for the children of the lowest classes.

The minutes of the committee for the year 1818 present many topics of interest. In the early part of it, the committee were called in as mediators, by the teachers of a school amongst whom much unpleasant feeling had arisen. Their interference was, doubtless, beneficial; and that school is now one of the largest and best conducted in the metropolis. It appears that the Essex Sunday school union sent a donation of £2. 2s.; which was returned, on the ground that the Union did not seek such assistance. The openings for usefulness which have since enabled the committee to promote the extension of Sunday schools in this and other countries, had not then been presented to their notice. Mr. Butterworth and Mr. Thompson were now appointed honorary members of the committee, as a testimony of

the esteem entertained for their exertions in the promotion of Sunday school instruction, although they were unable to take an active part in the proceedings of the Union. In this year, Mr. Robert Latter, who, as finance secretary, has long watched over the finances of the society with care and diligence, and Mr. William Bugby, one of Mr. Gurney's scholars, in the school at Walworth, to which reference has been already made, and who is still actively engaged in the promotion of the society's objects, were elected on the committee. Mr. J. A. Brown, who afterwards became one of the secretaries for managing the Depository, was also returned as a representative by the North London Auxiliary. Mr. R. Jones resigned his office as secretary, in July of this year; and in the following September, Mr. Edward M'Coy was invited to fill his place. The following resolution was adopted by the committee, at their July meeting; and proves that the Union was not founded on a principle of indifference to the fundamental doctrines of the gospel:—"Resolved, That an answer be sent to a question of the committee of the North London Auxiliary, stating that it is the decided opinion of this committee, that no Socinian Sunday School should be admitted into connexion with any Sunday School Union."


During this year, the committee divided their Spelling-book into four parts; and published a Reading-book, consisting of extracts from the sacred Scriptures.

The most important occurrence of the year 1818, however, was the establishment of a Depository for the sale of books and requisites for Sunday schools. Up to this



period, the publications of the Society had been sold by a bookseller on behalf of the committee: in the first instance by Mr. Kent, of High Holborn, exclusively; and subsequently by him in conjunction with Mr. Hamilton, of Paternoster-row. The committee had long desired to have the means of increasing the circulation of their own publications, and to be enabled to provide for Sunday schools, at reduced prices, such other publications as might appear suitable. They at length entered into an agreement with Mr. John Offor, bookseller, 44, Newgate-street, for the use of a part of his shop, and there opened a depository for the sale of approved publications adapted for Sunday schools. The catalogue then prepared comprised, — first, school books, lessons, &c.; secondly, books for Sunday school teachers; and it was proposed to extend it, so as to embrace a collection of select reward books read and approved by the committee.

The following were some of the advantages contemplated by this measure:—furnishing Sunday schools with lists and prices of such books, &c., as they might be constantly in the habit of using; supplying Sunday School Unions, and through them, Sunday schools, with needful books, &c., at the lowest possible prices; selecting suitable books read and approved by the committee, to the exclusion of those that are objectionable; saving time and trouble, by the whole order being completed at one place, and immediately dispatched to its destination; establishing a centre of communication, of influence, and of information, for the whole metropolis, the country at large, and, if possible, for the whole world. A sub-



committee was appointed to manage the affairs of the Depository, in order to ensure, as far as possible, the sale and publication of suitable works only. It was agreed that the approval of three members of the committee should be had before a book could be placed in the catalogue for sale; and that the approval of six members and the secretaries should be obtained to any work which was to be published by the Union.


The anticipations which were indulged as to this endeavour to extend the usefulness of the Union, might at that time appear visionary, but its subsequent history will show that they have been fully realized.

Amongst the works thus placed in the catalogue for sale, although not then published by the Union, were—The Church of England Catechism; Dr. Watts's First, Second, and Historical Catechisms; Brown's Short Catechism; The Assembly's, with and without Proofs from Scripture; and Thomas Wood's Methodist Catechism. At a subsequent period, the committee undertook the publication of all these; as also of the Baptist Catechism, with and without Scripture Proofs. It must be clear to every mind that the Union could not be considered as giving any recommendation to these works, which contain such opposite views on the questions in dispute between Pædo-Baptists and Anti-pædo-Baptists, as well as between Arminians and Calvinists. They were placed in the catalogue, and afterwards published, on the ground that they were necessary to the conducting of Sunday schools, and that a depository would be incomplete if it did not furnish them. Had the committee refused to sell these publications, they would

have been using their influence against the practice of teaching religious truth by the aid of printed catechisms, which they were not disposed to do. Doubtless the sale of them was open to the objection, that by this means the Union was instrumental in diffusing error, to a greater or less degree; but if such an objection were allowed to prevail, all association between christians entertaining different religious views, must cease. It was also considered, that as these works carry with them their distinctive character, no one could be misled; and that they were purchased and used by those only who approved of the sentiments they contain.

In the year 1819, Mr. Marriott, who had occupied the situation of treasurer from the formation of the Union, devoting himself with great assiduity to the carrying out its objects, retired from that office. Mr. Butterworth was requested to supply his place; which he consented to do, but took no part in the proceedings of the society, beyond that of presiding at its annual meetings. This duty he discharged for several years, with great satisfaction to those assembled, and with much benefit to the Union.

It was during this year, that the North London Auxiliary sent as one of their representatives to the committee, Mr. Peter Jackson, to whose quiet but persevering labours, combined with his great practical knowledge, as depository secretary for thirty-one years, the Union is indebted for a very large share of its present prosperity. Mr. Joshua Russell, now pastor of the Baptist church at Lewisham Road, Greenwich, was at this period elected on the committee. It was thought desira-



ble that permanent auditors of the accounts should be appointed; and as the increase of the trade rendered additional capital necessary, one loan of £50 was accepted from Mr. Thomas Thompson, and another of £100 from Mr. Henry Teape, the printer to the Union, to whom the committee already owed great obligations for his liberality in allowing them the extended credit which their limited means required.

The attention of the committee was occupied in the ensuing year, 1820, by a proposal submitted to them for publishing a Penny Magazine for Children. They determined in favour of the undertaking, but do not appear to have been sufficiently prompt. The idea was adopted and carried out by other parties, so that the committee found it inexpedient to proceed in their design. Thus the Youth's Magazine, and the Magazines for Children, really originated in the committee of the Sunday School Union, although few are now acquainted with the source from which these blessings proceeded. If these works have become more useful, in consequence of their having been brought into existence by those whose time was not so much occupied as that of the committee of the Union, there will be no cause for regret; but it is desirable that it should be known from whence they sprung.

CHAPTER V.

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IN the session of parliament held during the year 1820, Mr. (now Lord) Brougham brought forward his measure for better providing the means of education for His Majesty's subjects. A committee of the House of Commons had been previously engaged in enquiries as to the state of education. The bill brought in by that gentleman, as amended in committee, provided that a complaint of the want of schools might be made to the quarter sessions, by a grand jury, justice, minister, or householder. The justices were then to try the complaint; and if they determined that it was well founded, they were to issue a warrant to the receiver-general of the land tax, requiring him to advance the sum necessary to purchase land and build a school room. This advance was to be repaid out of the consolidated fund. The salaries of the masters were to be raised by the churchwardens, under a warrant of the justices, and to be paid half-yearly. The masters were to be chosen by the majority of householders present at a meeting in the school house; to which meeting, persons having real property in the parish, to the amount of £100 per annum, were to be allowed to send a representative. The name of the party chosen was to be sent to the rector,


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vicar, perpetual curate, curate, or other resident officiating minister ; and if he objected to the party elected, a fresh election was to take place ; and so on, in like manner, as often as the person chosen and reported should not be approved of by the resident officiating minister, and until he should approve of the person elected. It was provided, that no person should be capable of being chosen by such meeting, under the age of twenty-four, or above the age of forty ; or who did not produce a certificate of his character and ability, and that he was a member of the Church of England by law established, signed by the resident officiating minister and three landholders of the parish where he had lived for the last twelve months. The clergyman of the parish for which the master was chosen, was declared ineligible for the office ; but any other clergyman might be elected. It was further provided, that the master should teach the Holy Scriptures according to the authorized version, and use select passages thereof for reading and writing ; and should teach no other book of religion, without consent of the resident officiating minister ; and should use no form of prayer or worship, except the Lord's prayer, or other select passage of the Holy Scriptures. The Catechism of the Church of England, and such portions of its Liturgy as the resident officiating minister might appoint, were to be taught during the half of the school hours of one day in the week, to be fixed by the minister ; to whom the right of visitation and examination of the school was given, and who was also to have the power to direct the teaching of the catechism and liturgy, by the master, on

the evening of the Lord's day. The scholars were to attend the divine service of the Church of England once every Lord's day. Parents and guardians, however, might withdraw their children from the teaching of the catechism and liturgy, and from attendance on such divine service, on their taking care that the scholars so withdrawn should attend some other place of christian worship.

The power of dismissing the master was vested in the bishop of the diocese, either personally, or through his archdeacon, chancellor, or dean.

This measure did not meet with general acceptance. It was looked upon with suspicion by the members of the Church of England; probably on account of the quarter from which it came. The following extract from a pamphlet, written by the Rev. R. Lloyd, A.M., rector of St. Dunstan's in the West, will show the character of the objections stated against it:—"The nature of Mr. Brougham's plan of instruction does not, as far as I can perceive, essentially differ from the Lancasterian or British school. Whilst it admits some select portions of the Scriptures to be used, it prohibits all notes and comments, all explications whatever, illustrative of their sense; under the influence of a morbid and symbolizing liberality, which renounces what is peculiar, and adopts only what is common to all sects and parties. He has, indeed, made some concession in favour of our ecclesiastical establishment, in order, it seems, to render his bill more palatable to its members; but these concessions, which affect to relieve it of its obnoxious qualities, produce no such effect."



The dissenters, on the other hand, complained of the measure, as giving an undue preponderance in the education of the people to the established church; inasmuch as the master was required to be a member of that church, the schools were to be placed under clerical and episcopal control, and the provisions introduced for relieving the children of dissenters, would, if made use of, expose such children to painful observations.

The committee of the Sunday School Union appointed a sub-committee to watch the progress of the bill; and having obtained a copy, examined it, in reference to its effect on Sunday schools. They soon came to the conclusion that it must be most injurious, as it would withdraw the scholars, and undermine the foundation of benevolent and gratuitous instruction. They thought that the measure would deprive Sunday scholars of the invaluable means of moral and religious instruction they now enjoyed, without providing any substitute; that the mere repetition of catechism, attendance at public worship, and the routine of mechanical instruction by a paid master, was very far inferior to the unbought and inestimable labours of teachers who love their youthful charge, feel deeply concerned for their immortal welfare, and from principle devote themselves unremittingly to promote the benefit of the children whom they have voluntarily engaged to instruct.


The result of this measure, as it respected Sunday schools, was pointed out to its author. His reply was,—"Oh, they were only for the occasion: when the bill passes, there will be no more occasion for them." He



was told, "If you lose our Sunday schools, you will lose one of the best bonds of society; for these voluntary teachers"— "Voluntary teachers!" he exclaimed, "what do you mean? I don't understand what you mean by voluntary teachers." Some explanations were then given as to the constitution of Sunday schools: and with a view to further information, Mr. Butterworth requested him to visit a school in Drury-lane, in which that gentleman took great interest; and then, for the first time, did the talented author of the bill become aware of the beneficial influence which the labours of gratuitous teachers were exerting upon the rising generation of our land.

A general meeting of the gratuitous Sunday school teachers of London and its vicinity was convened, on the 16th February, 1821; at which resolutions were adopted, embodying the objections against the bill entertained by the committee, and instructing them to use the most energetic means to oppose its progress. It did not, however, become necessary to take any further steps, as Mr. Brougham was deterred by the resistance which had been excited, and did not again bring forward the measure.

The attention of the committee was much occupied during the remainder of this year, by numerous arrangements connected with the Depository. Up to this period the privilege of purchasing the works published and sold by the Union, had been confined to the schools connected with it; but, as the committee were now endeavouring to supply schools with all that was necessary for carrying them on, it was thought desirable,



both for the welfare of the schools, and for the interest of the society, that there should not be any hindrance to the free use of the advantages thus offered. It was therefore resolved, that for the future, the Depository should be open for the furnishing all Sunday schools with the publications of the Union, at the lowest scale of prices, for ready money. This liberality has produced the desired result. The increased circulation of the society's publications has enabled the committee to supply them at a cheaper rate than could otherwise have been done, so that the connected schools have thus also received benefit. Greater interest has been excited in the operations of the Union, and its works find their way into many schools, the teachers of which do not officially connect themselves with it, and thus, it is trusted, much advantage is gained by the scholars.


The increasing property of the Society drew the attention of the committee to the importance of providing for its security. With this view, it was agreed that the property should be vested in three trustees, who should hold it at the disposal of the committee. The individuals who were first selected to fill that office, were, Mr. Lloyd; Mr. Stephen Winnill, the superintendent of the school belonging to St. Swithin's Church, and who was for many years an active member of the committee; and Mr. David Niven, who had been for a long period connected with the Union.

It was also thought desirable, at this period, that the committee should discontinue the publication of reward books, and confine their attention to supplying Sunday schools with the essential requisites for their oper-

ations; preparing, at the same time, a selected list of suitable reward books, which should always be kept on sale at the Depository. The importance of such selection was clearly proved by the circumstance, that more than one-half of the books submitted for the examination of the committee, all of which professed to be designed expressly for the young, were deemed unsuitable for use in Sunday schools. The arrangement thus made has been ever since acted upon with great advantage. The reward books published by the Religious Tract Society, and by private individuals, have rendered it unnecessary that the committee should do more than place on their catalogue such works as appeared suitable to Sunday scholars. Thus, labour and capital has remained disposable for objects which could not otherwise have been attained.

Up to this time, the affairs of the Depository had been superintended by an officer, called a representative, who was paid for his services; but it was now agreed that this duty should be provided for gratuitously. Mr. J. A. Brown was requested to act as minute secretary to the depository sub-committee, and Mr. Jackson to take the superintendence of the printing and publishing department. From this period, the whole of the officers have conducted the business of the Union without remuneration.

The Hymn Book for Teachers was the only new publication which the committee appear to have issued during this year.



CHAPTER VI.

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THE publication of a Hymn Book for Teachers was followed, in the year 1822, by the preparation of one adapted for the use of scholars. In the early part of the year, the committee were requested to insert in their catalogue a Sunday School Tune Book, which had been published in the south of London ; but the request was declined, on the ground that such a work was unnecessary. The committee by whom this resolution was adopted, did not anticipate that their successors would devote so much of their attention to the preparation of a series of musical works, designed to promote the improvement of congregational psalmody, and which now forms so large a portion of the publications of the Union.

The importance of placing in the hands of scholars the entire Word of God, came to be increasingly felt, as the extension of education fitted a greater number to become Scripture readers. The high prices charged for Bibles and Testaments were a great hindrance to the spreading of Scripture knowledge, and were a heavy burden on the funds of Sunday schools. Repeated applications were made to the committee by the conductors of schools, who desired to know the best means of

procuring copies on the lowest terms. It was thought desirable to enter into communication with the British and Foreign Bible Society ; but the committee of that Institution did not then feel at liberty to do more than allow the Union to purchase on the same terms as those on which separate schools were supplied, namely, at the cost prices. The only advantage gained hereby was, that schools which had not the means of applying to a Bible Society, could obtain the books through the medium of the Union.

Mr. Lloyd, having prepared a work, designed to impart the leading truths of Christianity to the youthful mind, in the form of rhymes, which it was hoped would be readily learnt and retained in the memory, presented the copyright to the committee ; by whom it was published, under the title of the Little Child's Catechism. It met with much acceptance on the part of teachers, and has had an extensive circulation. A sub-committee was appointed to prepare a small work on Arithmetic, in order to assist in conducting week evening schools, for the benefit of those scholars who were deprived of the advantages of weekly instruction.

Considerable difficulties were often experienced in the formation of Unions in various parts of the country, from its not being found practicable to induce all the religious bodies to combine for that purpose. While this was to be regretted, it nevertheless seemed unwise, that those who desired to unite should be thus deprived of the advantages which they anticipated from a Union. While, therefore, the committee felt it important that the catholic character of such institutions should be



preserved and fully carried out, they at the same time thought it desirable to encourage the commencement of a Union, even where it could not be rendered so general as might be wished. With this view they adopted and made public the following resolution:—"That where local circumstances absolutely prevent the several evangelical denominations of Sunday school teachers from uniting together in one body, those friends, in one or more denominations, who may wish to form a Sunday School Union, be encouraged to begin by themselves, and then endeavour to procure the co-operation of the other denominations."

In the year 1823, the attention of the committee was directed to a subject on which a great difference of opinion then existed amongst teachers, and which it is believed still continues, although probably not to so great an extent as formerly; namely, the collection of money from Sunday scholars for objects not connected with the school. The Home Missionary Society had proposed to form a Sunday School Auxiliary Home Missionary Society in the South London district; the object of which was to raise money by weekly subscriptions from the teachers and children. Great doubts were entertained as to the propriety of making Sunday schools thus auxiliary to other institutions, however praiseworthy the purposes intended to be attained might be in themselves. It was thought, that if the children were solicited for contributions, their parents, who were generally very ignorant on such subjects, might be led to suppose that the teachers were guided by pecuniary motives, instead of being entirely gratuitous labourers,

and that their moral and religious influence would be thereby weakened. In addition to this, it was urged, that the abilities of the children or their parents to give are not equal, and thus an unpleasant feeling might be excited. The following resolution was therefore adopted:—"That this committee, having learnt that the Home Missionary Society are about to form Auxiliary Societies by deputations from Sunday schools, deem the formation of such committees, and deputations from schools, calculated to interfere with the plans of the Auxiliaries connected with the Sunday School Union, to diminish their funds, and to distract the attention of the Sunday school teachers from their present objects."

Mr. Althans having resigned his situation as one of the secretaries to the Union, the vacancy was supplied at the general meeting of this year, by the appointment of Mr. W. H. Watson.

A further advance was now made towards the formation of an independent establishment. Hitherto Mr. Offor had been considered the Depositary of the Union; but it was found that the increasing business of the Union required that it should be conducted separately from any other: an arrangement was therefore made with him for renting a part of his shop, and for conducting the business by an agent of the Society. This enabled the committee to undertake, in addition to the sale of their own publications, that of other approved works, on receiving a fair commission from the publishers.

At the close of this year, Mr. Butterworth intimated his unwillingness to continue to hold the office of trea-

surer; but as the committee were very reluctant to lose his services, they requested him to accept the presidency of the Union, which would preserve his connexion with it, while it would not involve any responsibility. To this proposal he agreed, and was accordingly elected president at the general meeting in 1824. Mr. David Niven was appointed treasurer in his stead.

It was soon found that the arrangement made with Mr. Ofor was not adequate to the rapidly extending business; and, in March of this year, the committee resolved to take the premises, No. 19, Paternoster Row, for the purposes of the Society. On this occasion the recent progress of the Union was ascertained, and entered on the minutes of the committee meeting in May. It appeared that the sales for the year ending April, 1822, amounted to £1567. 16s. 5d.; April, 1823, to £1744. 4s.; April, 1824, to £2964. 8s. 10d. The sales from 17th April, 1823, to 9th April, 1824, consisted of—

|         |                             |
|---------|-----------------------------|
| 250,569 | Spelling Books and Lessons. |
| 4,323   | Prayers.                    |
| 48,346  | Hymn Books.                 |
| 27,394  | Tracts and Sermons.         |
| 126,912 | Catechisms.                 |
| 71,332  | School Requisites.          |
| 49,809  | Reward Books and Magazines. |

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Total 578,685

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It will be remembered, that the whole number of copies of publications sold by the Union in the first nine




years of its existence, as stated in page 77, was only about 273,000; thus showing the large increase of its operations, so far as the Depository was concerned.

While it has been earnestly desired to unite all bodies of evangelical Christians in the important work of promoting Sunday school instruction, there has not been any disposition to sacrifice to the attainment of this object any of the great doctrines of the gospel. It has been ever felt that a Union which was founded on a principle of indifference to fundamental truth, could not expect the Divine blessing. Such a conviction induced the committee, on the 17th of June, to adopt the following resolution, which has ever since been printed in connexion with the general regulations of the society in the Annual Reports, in order to explain the principle upon which the Union is founded:—"That the Auxiliary and Country Unions be recommended to admit into connexion with them, such schools only, whose conductors are of orderly character, and who hold the doctrines of the Deity and Atonement of Jesus Christ, the Divine influences of the Holy Spirit, and that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God."

At the same meeting at which this resolution was adopted, the prices were fixed for the Bibles and Testaments, which it had been agreed should be placed on the catalogue. Nonpareil Bibles, in sheep, 5s., were reduced to 3s. 9d.; Testaments, in sheep, 1s. 6d. to 1s. 3d. The high prices which it was necessary to charge for the Scriptures in order to prevent loss, induced the committee to divide them into several portions for sale.

The plan of an association for erecting and superin-




tending a building, in which the meetings of religious and charitable societies might be held, was submitted to the committee, at their meeting in July of this year ; and being approved, two shares were subscribed for, in order to encourage the carrying of the design into effect. The result was the erection of Exeter Hall, which has become so well known as the head-quarters of the great religious institutions of our country.

CHAPTER VII.

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IN the year 1825, a small Collection of Hymns, designed for use at Anniversary Meetings of Teachers, was prepared and printed by the committee.

At the general meeting in May of this year, great interest was excited in reference to the establishment of Sunday schools in Greece; whose inhabitants were then asserting their independence of the Turkish empire. A resolution, moved by Rev. J. Bennett, seconded by Rev. Sereno Dwight, of Boston, North America, and supported by Rev. Thos. Mortimer, was adopted, by which it was declared, "That this Society, anxious to promote Christian instruction among the rising race of Greeks, engages to devote to the formation and support of Sabbath schools among that people, whatever contributions may be forwarded to them for this specific object." In furtherance of the design contemplated in this resolution, the committee agreed to encourage the preparation, in modern Greek, of a Summary of the History of Sunday Schools, and a Sunday School Hymn Book. To the former work they appropriated £50, and to the latter, £20. Efforts were also made to obtain additional funds; and a correspondence was opened with various parties, who, it was thought, would feel interested in this effort



to extend religious instruction; but no considerable results attended the exertions thus made. A few Sunday schools have been conducted, in the island of Corfu, under the zealous superintendence of the Rev. J. Lowndes, but the attempt to introduce them on the continent of Greece was not attended with success.


The anxiety which the committee felt to encourage the use of the Scriptures in Sunday schools, led to a renewed application to the British and Foreign Bible Society. The committee requested that they might be supplied with Bibles and Testaments for the exclusive use of Sunday schools, at the following prices:—Nonpareil Bibles, 2s.; Brevier Testaments, 9d. This request was not wholly complied with; but the committee of the Bible Society authorized its Auxiliaries to supply copies of the Scriptures, for school stock exclusively, at the above prices; so that a large number of schools were able to avail themselves of the advantages thus offered. The City of London Auxiliary immediately consented to place a sufficient number of copies at the disposal of the Union, on the above terms, by which means the schools within the city were readily supplied.

At the commencement of the year 1826, Mr. Lloyd communicated to the committee his inability to devote so much time as he had heretofore done to the concerns of the Union; and therefore tendered the resignation of his office of secretary—expressing at the same time his willingness to serve the Society as far as he was able. It was thereupon resolved, “That this com-

mittee cannot even reflect on the prospect of losing any portion of Mr. Lloyd's valuable services, without expressing earnestly and unitedly their grateful sense of the important benefits which the Society and the cause of Sunday schools have received from his devoted and efficient attention during a long series of years." He was requested to continue his services as Foreign Secretary, and Mr. Watson to undertake the Home Correspondence, in addition to his duties as Minute Secretary; and at the ensuing Annual Meeting, the Secretaries were designated in their appointments by the departments they respectively occupied. At the same time, Messrs. Brown and Jackson, the Secretaries to the Depository Sub-committee, were added to the list of the General Secretaries of the Union.

As the increasing business of the Union was gradually enabling the committee to make that addition to its capital which its circumstances required, they felt desirous that no doubt should exist as to the exact state of the Society's affairs. They therefore resolved that the amount of the capital should be stated, and the balance sheet published in the Appendix to the Report; which has been also done by every succeeding committee, so that the financial condition of the Union may be known by every one who thinks proper to refer to the Annual Report.

In consequence of the absence of the President from town, his place at the Annual Meeting was filled by Thos. Pellatt, Esq.; and at the meeting of the committee in July, the Secretaries had the mournful duty of communicating the intelligence of his decease. It



was immediately resolved, "That the committee of the Sunday School Union wish to record on their Minutes the deep sense they entertain of the devoted services of their late President, Joseph Butterworth, Esq., in promoting the cause of Sunday schools, with distinguished personal zeal, personal exertion, and liberality, for many years. While they bow with submission to the mysterious dispensation of Divine Providence, by which he was called from his sphere of usefulness, they express their conviction that his works will follow him; and they trust that his example will long be remembered, and prove a powerful stimulus to all their fellow labourers." This resolution was communicated to Mr. Butterworth's family, and inserted in the Teacher's Magazine.

The cause of Sunday schools sustained other losses during this year; among which the names of William Fox, Esq., the founder of the Sunday School Society, and Mr. Stephen Winnill, one of the early friends of the Union, deserve to be recorded.

The committee continued to devote considerable attention to the examination of books published for the young—the largest part of which was condemned as unsuitable for the Society's Catalogue. This showed the necessity that existed for teachers being cautious in the choice of books for their scholars, as well as the benefit to be derived from the watchfulness of the committee.


The only other events of the year which require notice, were the resignation of Mr. Brown, as Minute Secretary to the Depository—and the appointment of

Mr. Charles Edward Greenwood in his place. Mr. Brown still continued a member of the committee.

In the year 1827, the place of the late President was supplied by the Right Honourable the Earl Roden ; whose devoted attachment to Sunday schools, together with his personal exertions on their behalf, peculiarly qualified him for the vacant office.

The increase of business at the Depository rendered it necessary for the committee to take more commodious premises. They accordingly removed to No. 5, Paternoster Row, which was found well adapted for the meetings of the committee, and for the general business of the Society.

The committee had for a long period been sensible of the importance and necessity of increasing Sunday schools throughout the country, and of rendering those already established more efficient, especially as related to religious instruction. While much had been done, much still remained to be accomplished ; and the establishment of efficient Sunday School Unions seemed to be the best means of attaining the desired objects. Mere correspondence, or an occasional transient visit by a member of the committee, it was thought, could not produce the desired impulse. In America, the example had been set of employing Sunday School Missionaries, who had there been extensively useful. The committee had long been convinced that it was desirable to adopt such a plan in this country, but had been deterred from attempting it by the smallness of their funds. This difficulty was now removed by the liberal offers of some friends in the North of England ; and the com-



mittee thereupon engaged Mr. Joseph Reid Wilson, formerly Secretary of the Newcastle Union, to devote his whole time and energies to the arduous work of a Sunday School Missionary. Mr. Wilson's acquaintance with the Sunday school system, and his zealous, persevering, and successful exertions in extending and improving it, through the neighbourhood of Newcastle, pointed him out as admirably adapted for this employment.

In the following year, Mr. McCoy resigned his office as Finance Secretary, and was succeeded by Mr. Greenwood. A new edition of the Teacher's Hymn Book was printed ; and four small works, intended as presents to scholars on leaving school, were prepared and published. In the course of the year, a deputation from the committee visited the Unions in the counties of Kent and Sussex, with a view to carry out in those districts the objects which the Missionary was promoting in the North of England.



CHAPTER VIII.

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At the commencement of the year 1829, the committee felt themselves under the necessity of renewing their application to the British and Foreign Bible Society. It was found that many schools were unable to avail themselves of the liberal arrangements made, as before stated, on account of there not being any Auxiliary to which they could apply. The committee of the Bible Society, therefore, consented to supply such schools, through the Union, on its guaranteeing the payment for the copies of the Scriptures so furnished at the rate of 2s. for each Bible, and 9d. for each Testament.

Towards the close of the previous year, the committee had corresponded with Mr. James Gall, of Edinburgh, on the subject of the system of religious instruction contained in his work, entitled "The End and Essence of Sabbath School Teaching;" and understanding he was about to visit London, they invited him to explain his views to the teachers of the metropolis.

Mr. Gall accordingly met the committee on the 20th of March, when it was agreed that classes of children should be formed for the purpose of enabling him to exhibit practically the lesson-system of teaching. A

sub-committee of seven was appointed to carry the resolution into effect, and to observe the progress of the experiment. In order to afford the fullest and most minute opportunity for investigation, it was also agreed, that all the meetings should be public; and the committee circulated notices through the schools of London and its vicinity, inviting the attendance of teachers in general to witness the mode adopted by Mr. Gall in training the minds of the children.

In pursuance of the above appointment, and at Mr. Gall's request, some of the least informed scholars in one of the largest Sunday schools in London were selected, who were carefully and individually examined. From these, three boys and three girls, who were the most ignorant, and who seemed altogether unacquainted with the principles of Christianity, were formed into a class, and trained by Mr. Gall for thirteen evenings—about one hour each evening. The children received the little book, denominated "The First Step," and "The Second Initiatory Catechism, with the Exercises," to look over at home.

That the experiment might be more satisfactory and complete, Mr. Gall requested, that, if possible, children should be procured somewhat resembling the heathen, whose intellectual and moral attainments did not extend beyond their knowledge of natural objects, and whose feelings and obligations were, of course, regulated principally by coercion and fear of punishment.

Two of the committee accordingly undertook the search, and at last procured from the streets three

children, a boy and two girls, of the ages, so far as could be ascertained (for they themselves could not tell), of seven, nine, and eleven years. These children had no knowledge of letters ; knew no more than the name of God, and that he was in the skies, but could not tell anything about him, or what he had done. They knew not who made the sun, or the world, or themselves. They had no idea of a soul, or that they should live after death. One had a confused idea of the name of Jesus, as connected with prayers, which, however, she did not understand ; but had never heard of Adam, Noah, or Abraham. When asked if they knew anything of Moses, one of them instantly recollected the name ; but when examined, it was found that she only referred to a term usually applied to the old-clothes' men of London. They had no idea of a Saviour ; had no knowledge of heaven or hell ; had never heard of Christ ; and were ignorant whether the name belonged to a man or woman. The boy when strictly interrogated on this point, and asked whether he knew nothing at all of Jesus Christ, replied with much earnestness, and in a manner that showed the rude state of his mind, " No, upon my soul I do not." With these three children, Mr. Gall met publicly for eleven days, and trained them during one hour each day.

Three of the most intelligent girls of the school from which the first class was selected, and of the respective ages of eleven, twelve, and sixteen, were chosen to form a third class, and were instructed in the nature, and trained to the exercise of prayer as lessons only, and not as devotional exercises. They were also requested

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to provide for themselves two little children, each to be instructed by them in the principles of the Christian religion, from the Key to the First Initiatory Catechism. About half an hour each evening was devoted to this class.

As much of the value of this experiment depended on ascertaining the natural abilities and acquired habits of the children, previously to its commencement, the sub-committee endeavoured, during the time occupied by the exercises, to form a correct estimate of both. The natural capacities of the six children composing the first class were obviously and considerably below mediocrity. Some idea of this may be formed from the fact, that some had been at school seven years, and none fewer than five years, and yet remained in the state of ignorance which has been already mentioned. Their previous habits of mental wandering and inattention were also conspicuous, and appeared in three of them to be exceedingly inveterate. The natural abilities of the three children in the second class were better, and might be considered as a fair average of children in general. The members of the third class evidently possessed a higher order of intellect, and eagerly and rapidly acquired a knowledge of all that was taught them.

In order to afford the teachers throughout London and its vicinity an opportunity of witnessing the results of Mr. Gall's labours, a public meeting was held in each of the four Auxiliary Unions, when the lesson-system of teaching was explained by him, and illustrated by the examination of the first and second classes of

children thus trained; and on the 16th of April, a special meeting of the committee of the Sunday School Union was held, for the purpose of examining the children, and ascertaining by minute and accurate investigation the result of this important experiment.

A list of forty-four doctrines which had been taught to the first six children from the First and Second Initiatory Catechisms had been previously circulated amongst the members, that they might be the better prepared to ascertain whether the scholars really understood them; and after a careful examination, collectively and individually, by the chairman, Mr. Gall, and different members then present, the committee were quite satisfied that a correct knowledge and understanding of them all had been acquired.

The children were next examined from the "First Step," on Old Testament History, from the time of Adam to the death of Moses—of the leading circumstances of which they had obtained an accurate idea in chronological order, and showed a delightful aptitude in drawing from them those practical lessons which are taught by these historical facts. The most interesting branch of this part of their examination, however, was their application of the several lessons which they had previously drawn from the Scripture history.

The second class was next examined minutely and individually on the leading doctrines of Christianity. The enumeration and illustration of the several doctrines were given with a simplicity and in a language peculiarly their own, showing that they had acquired a clear knowledge of the several truths. They were also

examined on some parts of the Old Testament history, from which they also drew practical lessons, in a manner similar to the former class.

The third class were then examined on the nature and practice of prayer. They showed great skill in comprehending and defining the several component parts of prayer, as adoration, confession, thanksgiving, invocation, petition, &c. They first gave examples of each separately, and then with great facility made selections from each division in its order, which they gave consecutively.

They then turned several lessons and passages of Scripture into prayer, and the chairman and several of the gentlemen present read to them passages from various parts of the Bible, which they readily classified, as taught in the "Questions on Prayer," and turned into adoration, petition, confession, or thanksgiving, according to their nature, and as they appeared best suited for each. Some of the texts were of a mixed and even of a complicated nature; but in every case, and when they were not previously acquainted with the passages, they divided them into parts, and referred each of them to its proper class, as in the more simple verses.

A little child, who was taught solely from Mr. Gall's Catechisms, by one of these girls, was next examined, and showed a distinct knowledge of the principal truths of the Gospel. The young teacher, whose labours appeared so successful in communicating a knowledge of the Christian doctrines to this child of six or seven years of age, on being questioned as to her mode of teaching, stated to the committee that her pupil

repeated the words from the "First Initiatory Catechism," while she catechised her by the cross questions from the "Key" to that book, making her find out the answers in her own mind, from the words she had used.

The committee, having thus carefully watched the progress of the experiment, convened a public meeting of the teachers and friends of Sunday schools, at the Poultry Chapel, on Wednesday, the 22nd of April, at which the Rev. John Clayton presided, and an account of Mr. Gall's proceedings during the month was read. The classes above-mentioned, also the little girl who had been taught by one of her elder school-fellows, were then separately examined by Mr. Gall, and such examination afforded much interest and delight to the assembly. It was thought due to Mr. Gall, to prepare a detailed statement of his labours, which was printed and circulated at the ensuing Annual Meeting. In that statement the committee expressed their deliberate conviction, "That this system of teaching is eminently simple in its details, and well calculated to excite the attention, and to strengthen and expand the mind. That by its means truth is speedily and permanently conveyed to the understanding, and retained in the memory, and children are enabled to convert all they learn into practical use, in which consists the great peculiarity of the system, by drawing from it subjects for prayer, and lessons to guide them in their general conduct; while the application of the lesson to the common occurrences of life tends to revive all these upon the mind, to enlighten the conscience, and to prompt to duty."

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It may appear at first sight that the preceding statement has been too minute for a historical narrative, but this impression will be removed upon more attentive consideration. These proceedings bear a strong testimony to the importance of such an institution as the Sunday School Union. Had this not existed, there would have been no means of bringing before the attention of teachers the plans recommended by Mr. Gall, and the schools would have been deprived of the advantages they thus obtained. The results of Mr. Gall's labours were very considerable. It is true, that the interrogative system of teaching had been partially used by Sunday school teachers, and that they had sought to draw lessons of practical utility from their instructions; but Mr. Gall's lesson-system not only included all that such teachers had done, but extended much farther, by supplying the method through which they might train their scholars, in a progressive manner, to draw the lessons from the subjects, to give reasons for all the truths that might come under their notice, and to turn the whole, both in their devotional exercises and general conduct, into practical use. Many teachers, therefore, introduced the system, as a whole, into their schools; and very many more, without going so far, yet availed themselves of the principles laid down, and, by this means, improved the intellectual and practical character of their instructions. The beneficial influence of Mr. Gall's labours was not confined to London and its neighbourhood. Mr. Wilson, the Sunday school Missionary, explained the plan in the various places he visited, and thus the knowledge of it was extensively diffused.



But the strongest motive for recording in detail the results of Mr. Gall's efforts, is the influence they had on the operations of the Union. It is to those efforts that the improvements made in the publications of the Society must be attributed. One of the first acts of the committee, nominated at the Annual Meeting in the year 1829, was the appointment of a Sub-committee to consider what improvements might be made in the elementary publications of the Union. That Sub-committee held no less than one hundred meetings. Materials for a new system of progressive elementary instruction adapted to Sunday school classification were collected, and a separate book compiled for each of the first three classes of scholars, entitled the First, Second, and Third Class-Books. The lessons in these books consist of a three-fold exercise of reading, spelling, and catechism, or one continued series of short, simple, and instructive sentences, without columns of unconnected syllables or words, or any cumbrous appendages. Books of exercises on the lessons, as an assistance to teachers in the third part of the exercise belonging to this new system of elementary instruction, were also published, and a very large circulation has rewarded the labour thus bestowed. Deeply, however, as the committee felt the value of this improvement, they did not think it right to force the adoption of it on their fellow-teachers. They therefore continued to publish the Spelling and Reading Books, which are still extensively used.

The attention of this Sub-committee was at the same time directed to the catechisms published by the Union. In endeavouring to render them more useful in

imparting religious knowledge, two important principles were adopted: First, that every answer should be a complete sentence, containing an intelligible proposition independently of the question; and, Second, that the text committed to memory should be illustrated and enforced by interrogatory exercises. Before attempting improvements, however, the text of Dr. Watts's Catechisms was revised from an original edition, and neatly stereotyped, to insure accuracy in the genuine editions of those esteemed works. After the process of filling up the answers from the questions, and removing every other obstruction from the learner, exercises were added. These were contained in the improved editions of the three catechisms of Dr. Watts; besides which, the Little Child's Catechism has been published on a similar plan.

## CHAPTER IX.

IN the course of the year 1829, a deputation from the committee visited the Unions in the counties of Essex, Suffolk, and Cambridge. The Chelmsford and West Essex Union was formed in consequence.

The committee, in closing their Report to the Annual Meeting in May, 1829, observed—"In order still further to extend the benefits of religious instruction, it is of unspeakable importance that these three objects should be kept continually in view:—1st. That, in all our schools, increased attention should be paid to apply religious instruction to the understandings and the consciences of our children.—2nd. That Bible classes, or catechetical classes, should be formed, to include all the young people in our respective congregations who are not comprehended in Sunday schools.—3rd. That peculiar attention should be paid to qualify the teachers to fulfil their important duties in the most efficient manner." The first of the above objects was sought to be carried out by improvements made in the elementary publications of the Union. In order to further the second object, the Rev. H. F. Burder, D.D., at the request of the committee, prepared an Address to Ministers on the subject of Bible Classes, which was

printed, and widely circulated. With a view to the third object, the committee requested the Rev. J. P. Smith, D.D., the Rev. Isaac Mann, A.M., and the Rev. H. F. Burder, D.D., to deliver courses of lectures to teachers during the year 1830.

In the summer of this year, a deputation from the committee visited parts of Berkshire, Somerset, Herefordshire, and Gloucestershire. The deputation attended meetings of the existing Unions, and also succeeded in establishing the Reading, Hereford, Ross, and Gloucester Sunday School Unions. At the request of the committee, also, Mr. Henry Althans visited the schools at Christchurch, Hampshire, superintended by the Rev. Daniel Gunn. A detailed account of that visitation was published, and still exists among the Tracts of the society.

A new edition of the Sunday School Teacher's Hymn Book, considerably altered and enlarged, was published in the year 1831; and Mr. Robert Latter was appointed Finance Secretary, in the place of Mr. Greenwood, who resigned that office.

This year will ever be memorable, on account of the celebration of the Jubilee of Sunday schools. The idea had been suggested to the committee of the Union by Mr. James Montgomery, the warm friend of Sunday schools, as well as the Christian poet. In a letter to Mr. Lloyd, dated Dec. 11, 1829, Mr. Montgomery remarked—"It has occurred to me that a Sunday school Jubilee, in the year 1831, fifty years from the origin of Sunday schools might be the means of extraordinary and happy excitement to the public mind in favour of

these Institutions, of which there was never more need than at this time, when daily instruction is within the reach of almost every family; for the more universal the education of the children of the poor becomes, the greater necessity there is that they should have religious knowledge imparted to them; which can be done, perhaps, on no day so well as the Lord's." This communication excited much anxious deliberation. The result was, that in the Report presented to the Annual Meeting of this year, the committee stated the plan which they recommended for the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of Sunday schools. This plan had been detailed in a circular issued by the committee, and was embodied in the Report. The committee proposed that the sum of £10,000 should be raised: 1st, to encourage the erection of additional permanent buildings adapted for Sunday schools, which might also be suitable for infant or day schools; 2ndly, for the promotion of Sunday school Missions. The following plans for raising this Jubilee Offering were suggested: 1st, a collection in all places of public worship, on Sunday, Sep. 11, 1831; 2ndly, donations of one shilling and upwards from the friends and teachers of Sunday schools, and one penny from Sunday school children, for which collecting cards would be provided by the Union. The plan proposed for celebrating the Jubilee was as follows:—

1. That the Sunday school Jubilee be held on Wednesday, the 14th of September, 1831—the anniversary of Mr. Raikes's birthday.

2. That a prayer meeting of Sunday school teachers,

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## JUBILEE MEDALS.

*London. - Sunday School Union, Jan 1 1832.*

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either united or in each separate school, as may be thought most advisable, be held from seven to eight o'clock in the morning.

3. That the children in the schools connected with the Auxiliary and Country Unions, be assembled for public worship; the service to commence at half-past ten, and close at twelve.

4. That at six o'clock a public meeting be held in Exeter Hall, for the teachers of London and its vicinity, and that public meetings be held at the same time in each of the country Unions.

5. That a collection be made at the public meetings to complete the Jubilee Offering.

6. That as Sunday school Unions do not at present exist in some parts of this country, it is recommended that in such places Sunday school teachers should unite for the purpose of celebrating the Jubilee according to the above plan, and transmit their contributions to the Sunday school Union.

Mr. Montgomery kindly wrote two hymns for teachers and one for scholars, and Mrs. Gilbert another for scholars, to be used at the above meetings, which, with a portrait of Mr. Raikes, were engraved on steel. Medals were also struck in commemoration of the occasion; and, at the request of the committee, Mrs. Copley prepared a sketch of the History of Sunday schools, adapted to the perusal of children. The sale of these publications was so extensive, that the profits arising from them wholly defrayed the large expenses which the committee incurred in the celebration.

This extensive demand arose from the great interest

which the proposed festival excited, and afforded reason to hope that a large portion, if not the whole, of the £10,000 would be raised as a Jubilee Offering. But in the Evangelical Magazine for August there appeared a letter signed "Monitor," written by a highly esteemed minister, since deceased; it was also especially commended to attention by the Editor. The object of the letter was to excite suspicion as to the design of the committee in soliciting the Jubilee Offering, as to the mode in which it was to be expended, and as to the manner of celebrating the Jubilee. As the writer of this article, and the editor of the work in which it appeared, subsequently acknowledged that their suspicions were unfounded, it is not necessary to go into details on this painful subject. So far as the Jubilee Offering was concerned, the attack was so well timed that it could not fail of its effect. The efforts which were making throughout the country were paralysed, and although a full and complete vindication of the committee appeared as early as possible, yet there was no time to restore the confidence which had been destroyed. Thus, instead of £10,000, only £2,257. 19s. 8d. was contributed, of which £1,180. 6s. 9d. was received through the London Auxiliaries.

In other respects, however, the interest which had been excited was not destroyed. The arrangements made by the committee were carried out, not only in London, but in most parts of the country; and a season of holy excitement and pleasure was experienced, which still dwells in the memory of those who were privileged to partake of it. A report of the mode in which the

Jubilee was celebrated throughout the country, with an account of the sums contributed towards the Jubilee Offering, was printed; but it would be improper to attempt here to detail the particulars. The largest assemblage of scholars in London was at Exeter Hall, where 4,043 were gathered together. It was found impossible to admit the whole into the large Hall; where the Rev. John Morison, D.D., delivered the address, from Jer. iii. 4: "Wilt thou not from this time, cry unto me, My father, thou art the guide of my youth?" Those who were thus excluded, were addressed in the lower Hall, by the Rev. Jos. Ivimey. Very many similar meetings were held, in various parts of London and its vicinity; and, probably, 50,000 scholars thus joined in celebrating the Jubilee. In the afternoon, however, the interest which, in the earlier parts of the day, had been distributed in different portions amongst the respective prayer meetings of teachers, and assemblies of scholars, became concentrated upon one object—the great Jubilee Meeting of Sunday School Teachers at Exeter Hall. The committee had announced, on the tickets of admission, that the doors would be opened at five, and the chair taken at six o'clock: and as the day approached, and it was found that the attendance would be overwhelming, the committee were reminded, by those teachers who, from their engagement with the scholars' services, and their distance, feared that they could not be present at an early period, that it would be a breach of faith if the doors were opened before the stated time. The committee felt the inconvenience of their position, and

determined to adhere to the announcement. The result was, the collection of so great a crowd at the entrance, and so great a rush when the doors were opened, as determined the committee never again to bind themselves by any statement, as to when the doors would be opened for their public meetings; leaving that to be determined by circumstances.

The chair was taken by the Right Hon. Lord Henley. After singing the Jubilee Hymn, "Let songs of praise arise," &c., the Rev. R. H. Shepherd offered up prayer to God; and Mr. Lloyd read an address from the committee, stating the circumstances under which the meeting had been convened. The business of the meeting was then introduced by the Noble Chairman; and the Rev. John Blackburn moved, and the Rev. F. A. Cox, D.D., seconded, the following resolution:—"That in reviewing the past fifty years, the small beginnings, the gradual progress, and the present extension of Sunday schools, at home and abroad, demand our grateful acknowledgments to Almighty God; by whose blessing these Institutions have been made the means of greatly promoting the instruction of the young, and of raising up, both from the scholars and teachers, many devoted and successful labourers in the Church of Christ."

The second resolution was moved by the Rev. John Burnet, and seconded by John Ivatt Briscoe, Esq., M.P., and was to the following effect: "That the increase of our population, and the extension of general knowledge, show the vast importance of augmenting the means of religious education; and that, from the present era, the

friends of education are called upon to make the most strenuous efforts to increase the number of Sunday school teachers and scholars, both at home and abroad." The Rev. J. C. Brigham, of New York, Secretary to the American Bible Society, then furnished to the meeting some details relative to the progress of Sunday schools in America: after which the Rev. John Morison, D.D., moved—"That in order to promote the extension of religious education, it is of great importance to raise the means for the promotion of Sunday School Missions, and to encourage the erection of additional permanent buildings, adapted for Sunday schools, which may also be suitable for infant or day schools." This resolution was seconded by the Rev. Samuel Drew, A.M.; and, with a vote of thanks to the Chairman, who presented a cheque for twenty guineas, as his contribution to the Jubilee Offering, terminated the business of the meeting. In acknowledging the vote of thanks, his Lordship said—"You will easily, I am sure, believe me, my Christian friends, when I inform you, that I never yet felt so great a degree of embarrassment, in receiving the approbation of my fellow Christians, as on the present occasion. This meeting—exceeding in point of numbers any that I have seen—exceeding, as I am sure it does, in knowledge and intelligence, and in Christian spirit, every meeting that I ever before beheld collected within the walls of an assembly,—to receive the thanks and the approbation of such a meeting, is a proud moment in the life of one, who never sought public applause or public favour. It is a moment that cannot be appreciated. Ladies and gentlemen,—till to-

day, though I was aware of their excellence—though I was aware of much of the good that has been done by Sunday schools—I was, to a degree, ignorant of the vast amount of good derived from their hands. In the words of one of our poets, I would say,

‘ Greatly instructed, I shall hence depart,  
Greatly improved in mind, and thought, and heart.’

May you proceed from grace to grace. May this work of faith and labour of love extend, not only throughout this country, but to the most distant shores. May it extend to nations yet unborn, and be the means of raising millions to happiness in this world, and to a crown of glory in the world to come.”

The vast assembly then rose, and sang the Jubilee Hymn, “Love is the theme of Saints above,” &c. The effect of this concluding exercise was most overwhelming, and will never be forgotten by those who had the happiness to be present.

In order that those who had been unable to obtain admission might not be wholly disappointed, the lower Hall was opened, and quickly filled. Here, the Rev. Samuel Hillyard, of Bedford, presided; and addresses were delivered by Mr. Gurney, Rev. Robert Vaughan, Thomas Farmer, Esq., Rev. Jos. Belcher, Rev. Arthur Tidman, Rev. Thomas Binney, and Rev. George Evans. The last speaker communicated the intelligence, which had arrived that afternoon, of the simultaneous celebration of the Jubilee in America. Notwithstanding this additional meeting, there were still many who were unable to share in the intellectual feast thus provided;

and for their accommodation, the Rev. J. Macnaughten, the minister of the Scotch Church in Crown Court, kindly lent the use of that place—where a third meeting was held. James Wyld, Esq., presided; and the Rev. Jos. Ivimey, Rev. W. D. Day, Rev. W. Davis, Missionary to Graham's Town, South Africa, Rev. J. Macnaughten, Thomas Thompson, Esq., and Lieutenant Arnold, addressed the assembly.

The anticipations indulged by Mr. Montgomery, as to the results of the Sunday School Jubilee, were realized to a considerable extent. Teachers were led to think more highly of their work; while the Church was induced to form a more correct estimate of the importance of these Institutions. But such a festival could not have been celebrated, had not the Sunday School Union existed, to arrange and guide it. Thus, another proof was afforded of the value of such an Association.



CHAPTER X.

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NEARLY the whole amount contributed in connection with this Jubilee celebration was applied in aid of the erection of school rooms throughout the country, thereby aiding very materially the extension and improvement of the Sunday school system. When this fund was exhausted, so much benefit was found to have arisen from its prudent distribution in this manner, that it was thought desirable to make such assistance a permanent object, and a considerable portion of the benevolent income of the Union has been thus distributed. The committee have been anxious that the buildings, the erection of which was thus assisted, should be available for daily instruction, and have always required that they should be vested in trustees for the benefit of the public. In consequence of the contributions falling so far short of what had been contemplated, the other object which the committee had in view, the promotion of Sunday school Missions, could only be carried out to a very limited extent.

The pleasing feelings excited by the Jubilee services had not subsided when the committee had to lament the loss of their oldest member and Treasurer, Mr. David Niven. His assiduous attendance, his unassuming

deportment, and his kind liberality, had much endeared him to his companions in labour. A legacy of £400, free of duty, testified that to the last his attachment to the Union remained unabated. The vacancy thus occasioned was filled at the following Annual Meeting by the appointment to the office of Treasurer of Mr. William Brodie Gurney, the founder and first secretary, who had been compelled by the pressure of other engagements to relinquish any active exertions on behalf of the Institution, but who was glad to be thus able to renew his connexion with it.

The Annual Meeting of this year was remarkable as being the first of that series of assemblies which have now for so many years filled Exeter Hall with probably its largest and most enthusiastic audiences. The success which had attended the celebration of the Jubilee had excited a feeling that the time had come when the pleasant morning meetings of the Union must give way to others where a more convenient time and a more spacious building would permit the assemblage of a larger number of their fellow teachers. The falling off in the attendance at these morning meetings also betokened that the time had arrived for making a change. Lord Henley presided at the first and second of these meetings, soon after the latter of which he was visited with affliction, which in no very lengthened period closed his earthly career, to the deep sorrow of those who had beheld his entire devotedness to the service of the Saviour. On being applied to on one occasion to undertake some service for the Union, he observed that he had been that morning engaged in visiting for the

District Visiting Society, and was then going to attend the levée of his sovereign, intimating that the former occupation afforded him the most pleasure, although he felt that from the station he occupied it was his duty not to neglect the latter.

The attention of the committee was now occupied by a plan for establishing at their Depository a Library and Reading Room for Sunday school teachers, to the advantages of which also all members of Sunday School Unions should be admitted. The subscription was fixed at 5s. per annum, but it was agreed that clergymen and ministers having Sunday schools in connection with their congregations, and Sunday school teachers, or friends of Sunday schools occasionally visiting London, should have free admission on being introduced by a member of the general committee. The sum of £150 was devoted to the purchasing of books, and the room was opened for the use of the subscribers on July 1, 1833. The expediency of allowing part of the books to constitute a Circulating Library was considered but not then decided upon.

The lease of the Society's premises having expired, and there being much occasion for additional accommodation for the business and other purposes of the Union, it was thought desirable to take a lease of the premises No. 60, Paternoster Row, and to re-build them in a form better adapted for the objects in view. The expense of this building was entirely defrayed from the trade funds of the Union. It was opened on Wednesday, May 9th, 1835, when the committee and a few other friends met together for the purpose of imploring

the Divine blessing on the undertaking. The Treasurer presided, and the devotional exercises were conducted by Messrs. Challis, Jones, Lloyd, and Thomas. In entering upon these more extensive premises it was thought practicable to increase the usefulness of the Library and Reading Room by the occasional delivery of Lectures on subjects adapted to assist teachers. The opening lecture was delivered on Wednesday, July 8th, by the Rev. Samuel Green, on "The Design of Revelation." This was followed by many others during successive years, the particulars of which it might be tedious to record, but from which the subscribers to the library and their friends derived much instruction. It may probably not be considered unsuitable to advert distinctly to a Course of Lectures delivered gratuitously in the year 1837, by the late Rev. Dr. J. Pye Smith, on "The General Principles of Geology in relation to Mineral substances and to the Fossil remains of Vegetable and Animal Nature," which excited intense interest, and into which he freely poured the stores he had accumulated on this favourite subject of his studies. The increased accommodation afforded for the Library also enabled the committee to extend its advantages, under certain necessary regulations, to senior scholars.

The Annual Meeting was this year presided over by Mr. Challis, and was very numerously attended. On removing it to Exeter Hall, all suitable means were adopted to secure an increased attendance proportioned to the much larger place to be occupied, but for the first two years without success. On the third year it was therefore determined to issue tickets of admission

to the Hall. This largely augmented the number of those desirous of obtaining admission, and in this, the fourth year, so large was the attendance, that it became necessary to open the lower room for the benefit of those who, although holding tickets, could not make their way into the upper hall. The inconveniences attending a double meeting have, however, disinclined the committee from again undertaking it, and some improvements in the Hall from time to time have enabled a larger number to share in the pleasures of these festivals, but still very many who would gladly be present are necessarily excluded.

In the month of March, 1836, a Special General Meeting of the Society was held, when it was agreed to define more clearly the members who constitute the Union, and to recognize the members of the Branch Unions, as well as of the Auxiliaries with which they are connected. The Report presented to the Annual Meeting of this year contained some statements of permanent interest, and which may be suitably introduced here.

“The committee embrace this opportunity of stating that in joining a Sunday School Union there is no interference with the private concerns of Sunday schools, no amalgamation of the funds, no sacrifice of any peculiarities; the object is to benefit all Sunday schools, to injure none; to encourage and assist local efforts; and in short, to extend and render the Sunday school system efficient through the direct agency of those who have already shown their devoted attachment to the cause of gratuitous religious instruction upon evan-

gelical principles. The committee wish to direct the attention of christian ministers, and their fellow-labourers, to the very important class of young persons who have a peculiar claim on the attention of Christians; they refer to the young people of fifteen and upwards, who form the senior classes in Sunday schools. Such young people, escaping from the control of mere authority, too often desert the Sunday school at this critical age, and disappoint the hopes of their best friends. The committee would urge the great importance of keeping them still under the influence of christian teachers, churches, and ministers; they should be assembled, if possible, in a separate room, be placed under a teacher who is both intelligent and affectionate, and receive his private as well as general attention. They should be deemed rather young friends than scholars, and, like the ancient catechumens, should be trained up for members of the christian church. Such a course is the most likely means of providing a good succession of Sunday school teachers, of guarding the young from the snares of life, and of carrying out the great object of religious instruction, namely, to prepare the young, through the divine blessing, for the church on earth and the church in heaven."

The same Report from which this quotation has been made, also adverted to the returns on the subject of education, which had been obtained through the medium of the parish officers in the year 1833, and which had been presented to parliament, and which were the most complete that had been then published. The returns shewed that in England 1 in 10½, and in Wales 1 in 14½, of

the population were receiving daily instruction, and that the Sunday schools of England contained 1 in  $9\frac{1}{2}$ , and those of Wales 1 in  $4\frac{1}{2}$ , of the population. This extraordinary fact with respect to Wales shows that in that country the Sunday schools comprise the adult as well as the youthful population. The total number of Sunday schools in England and Wales was reported to be 16,828, containing 1,548,890 scholars, the population being then estimated at 14,400,000. There was one fact brought out by these returns to which the committee thought it necessary to direct the attention of the Annual Meeting, that out of the 55,799 daily and Sunday schools reported, only 2,464 had circulating libraries attached to them. In addition to thus arousing the anxiety of their fellow-teachers, the committee themselves took the matter into consideration, the result of which was to determine to devote £300 to grants of lending libraries for Sunday schools at very reduced prices. They also applied to the Religious Tract Society, who kindly and liberally offered to supply their works to the extent of £300, at the same reduced prices. The committee also procured copies of numerous works which appeared likely to be suitable for these libraries, and carefully perused them. Out of the works so examined a considerable number was rejected as unsuitable, and ultimately a catalogue was formed consisting 353 volumes. The books were supplied at about one-third the retail prices, and the advantage thus held out was readily embraced. In one village in the North of England, the teachers went from house to house to collect the sum required to be

paid, and in one school near London the children themselves contributed nearly the whole amount. Thus commenced a very important branch of the benevolent operations of the Union, by which Sunday schools generally have been much benefited. The list of approved books has increased to 800 volumes, and had nothing more been done than to examine the works professedly designed for the young, and thus to form a list to which teachers might resort with confidence, the great labour undertaken by the committee in this investigation would not have been spent in vain. The title, the author, the publisher, or the external appearance, cannot be relied on, and as teachers cannot in all cases be intimately acquainted with the works they are about to purchase, it becomes greatly important to them that there should be accessible to them a list of works which have been carefully examined, and which may be put into the hands of the young without anxiety. But the advantage to teachers has not rested here; they have been permitted to purchase the many thousand volumes contained in the libraries so granted, and the retail prices of which would have amounted to £16,762, for about one-third of that sum.



CHAPTER XI.

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It has already been stated that the Bible Society had consented, on the application of the committee, to supply copies of the Scriptures, at reduced prices, to Sunday schools, for use in school; and the committee sought, during the year 1836, that the privilege might be so far extended as to enable schools to obtain copies for their own use, on the same terms. The application was not, however, successful; but the West London Auxiliary Union formed a Bible Fund for this purpose, and in a short time distributed 1084 Bibles and 870 Testaments.

During this year the committee undertook the preparation of a tune book. This had been long previously urged upon them, but declined, and then undertaken by some private individuals. Still, the want experienced did not appear to be met, and the committee at length felt it their duty to apply themselves to the work. The specific object aimed at, and which guided the selection of tunes, was, to enable teachers to conduct, with comfort, the devotional exercises in their schools. It was, however, soon found that the work was acceptable to congregations generally, and the rapid sale of the first, and very imperfect edition, encouraged the com-

mittee, at a subsequent period, to prepare and publish a revised and greatly-improved and extended work, better adapted for congregational use, which has also been recently enlarged. The tunes introduced, were selected not so much according to the estimate, formed by the committee, of their musical character, as by their general acceptance. By this means the publication was rendered more useful, and its circulation has been proportionably great. In the various forms in which it has been published, 40,000 copies have been sold, and an important aid has thus been rendered to the devotional exercises in congregations and schools. In addition to the Union Tune Book, the committee published the Union Harmonist, containing longer pieces of sacred music; and also the Juvenile Harmonist, designed for the young. These varied efforts to meet, direct, and sanctify the musical taste, have, it is believed, been productive of great good, and especially when considered in connexion with the endeavours made, during several years past, to extend the taste for music throughout the land. The committee discovered that meetings of young persons, many of them Sunday scholars, assembled, with the professed design of receiving instruction in the art of singing, but under circumstances calculated to do injury to their moral and religious character. The committee therefore recommended the subject of forming classes or associations for singing in Sunday schools, as one of considerable interest and importance to teachers generally; and, in various ways, sought to render their fellow-teachers aid in these attempts. In illustration of this, it may be mentioned,

that upon an application from the Manchester Union, to provide cheap music for the singing classes established amongst the scholars, the committee promptly published, in penny numbers, the Scholar's Hymn Book, with a tune adapted to each hymn.

The attention of the committee was also directed to the efforts making to enable the blind to read. They carefully examined the raised characters adopted by Mr. Gall, and satisfied themselves of the practicability of the object being attained. At a meeting held especially for this purpose, a blind youth read with great facility, any portion of the book placed before him, and the committee felt it their duty to aid in conferring so great a blessing as the art of reading, on those who were suffering from the loss of sight. They therefore instructed Mr. Gall to print the First Class Book, which he did, and considerable numbers were sold.

During this year Lord Brougham presented to the House of Lords a Bill for providing a system of National Education. A sub-committee was appointed to examine the Bill, and watch its progress. They found that it exhibited a vast improvement on the plan proposed by the noble lord, while a member of the House of Commons; but feared it would not be found acceptable to those who felt most concerned for the religious education of the people. The Bill, however, was not proceeded with, so that the further interference of the committee was not necessary.

In consequence of the severe indisposition of Mr. Lloyd, who had, for 26 years, watched over the growing

progress of the Union, the preparation of the report presented to the Annual Meeting, in 1837, was necessarily intrusted to other hands—it being however hoped that he would be speedily restored to health, and to his extensive sphere of usefulness in the church. These hopes, however, were disappointed, and Mr. Lloyd felt it his duty to tender his resignation of the office which he had held for so many years, with honour to himself, and with usefulness to the society. The committee, on receiving this communication, passed resolutions expressive of their deep sense of the services rendered by their Secretary, and their sympathy with him under his affliction, and requested him to allow his name to remain as Secretary, with the understanding that he should not be expected to act any further than might be agreeable to him. They adopted these resolutions from a conviction that the interests of the Union would be promoted by the continuance amongst its officers of the individual under whose guidance it had, under the Divine blessing, attained the eminence it then occupied; and from a desire to testify, so far as was in their power, their high esteem of his long-continued and disinterested labours in the cause of the religious instruction of the young.

The labours of Mr. Wilson, as travelling agent of the Union, were suspended in the year 1837, in consequence of the death of his father, which compelled him to devote himself for a season to the duties thereupon devolving upon him. Those duties, however, proved more onerous than had been anticipated, and ultimately, a variety of circumstances concurred to induce Mr.

Wilson to tender his resignation. The committee felt it to be their duty, in accepting this resignation, to record their sentiments of esteem for him, by resolving, "That the committee regret to receive Mr. Wilson's resignation, and trust, that in retiring from the arduous labours in which he has been for so many years engaged, he may enjoy the satisfaction of witnessing the beneficial results of his exertions."

The labours of Mr. Wilson had very much tended to promote the interests of the Union; he had made known its objects, had brought its publications before the friends of Sunday schools; and the result was a relinquishment of much prejudice with which the Union had previously had to contend. But those exertions had been still more useful to Sunday school teachers throughout the country. His addresses awakened their zeal, and directed them to the adoption of plans for the improvement of their schools, from which the scholars long continued to derive benefit; while his earnest appeals to the children assembled on various occasions, were in many instances blessed to the conversion of souls.

The committee did not fill up the vacant office. They thought that as Mr. Wilson had been engaged for several years in visiting the country, explaining the objects of the society, recommending the establishment of Local Unions, and encouraging Sunday school teachers in their work, it had become less necessary that such agency should be continued. But as they felt that some assistance might be usefully yielded to Local Unions at their Annual Meetings, they resolved to send

deputations to attend such meetings, whenever requested so to do, hoping that such deputations would preserve the Local Unions in a state of activity and usefulness, and would increase the interest felt in the proceedings of the parent Institution.

During the session of Parliament of this year, a Bill was brought into the House of Commons for establishing a race-course at Notting Hill, in the western suburbs of the metropolis, and for diverting a foot-path which passed over the ground. The measure was strongly opposed by many persons in the neighbourhood, who thought that such an establishment in the immediate vicinity of the metropolis would lead to many evils; but the Bill was passed by the House of Commons on the promoters of it consenting to the introduction of a clause entitling the public to gratuitous admission on Sundays and some other specified days. Those persons who were interested in the religious instruction of the young felt that they ought to make some effort to prevent the adoption, by the legislature, of a principle so fatal to the religious observance of the Lord's day, and a petition to the House of Lords against the passing of such a Bill was therefore prepared, and signed by about 6,600 Sunday school teachers. The committee cheerfully granted £10 towards the expense incurred, and had the satisfaction of finding that the resistance to this injurious measure proved successful.

The committee were not only called upon to protect the Lord's day from the inroad of worldly pleasure, but also from the introduction of worldly business. At the close of this year they learnt that it was in contem-

plation to make arrangements in the London Post Office for sorting and transmitting to the country on Sundays, the letters which arrive in London on the morning of that day. They found on enquiry that there were 650 bags of letters which arrived at the Post Office on each of the six working days, which brought on an average 70,000 letters. On the Lord's day only fourteen bags of letters arrived (twelve from sea-port towns, and one each from Scotland and Ireland), bringing about 2,000 letters. Of these 1,700 were for London, and 300 for the country. The business at present only required the attendance of one clerk at the Office, with six or seven messengers, sorters, &c., to forward government letters, and to secure the others in a place of safety. This whole duty seldom occupied more than an hour and a half, but if the letters had to be transmitted, every road division (20 in number) in the Inland Office, would be set to work, and in the whole no less than 100 persons would have been required to transmit the letters which usually arrived. These, however, would form no criterion of the numbers which might then be expected, as that limited number was caused by the knowledge which parties in the country had, that the letters if received would not be delivered or transmitted. If it were known, however, that the letters would be delivered or transmitted, the number would speedily increase so as to require the attendance of a large part of the Post Office force.

The committee felt this matter to be of very serious importance. It was setting a bad example, which would be too readily followed, and even if confined in the first

instance to the transmission of letters to the country, it violated the principle of the religious observance of the day, and would, they believed, lead on to a London delivery also, the immediate and indirect evils of which could not be estimated. Under these circumstances the committee felt it their duty to prepare a memorial to the Lords of Her Majesty's Treasury, stating the evils which they apprehended, and praying that the cessation from business on the Lord's day which had hitherto existed in the London Post Office, might continue to be observed. This memorial was signed by about 6,200 Sunday school teachers of London, and presented to their lordships. The committee did not find that any intention existed of obtaining a public and united manifestation of christian feeling on this subject, and believing such a measure to be important, they convened a public meeting at Exeter Hall on December 26th, at which Sir C. E. Smith, Bart., presided, trusting that it might be the means of preventing the dreaded evil, and that at all events it would be useful in calling the attention of Christians to a subject which is becoming increasingly important, namely, the due observance of the Lord's day. Much difference of opinion exists as to the propriety of enforcing the outward observance of that day by any legislative enactment; but no such difference will be found among Sunday school teachers as to the desirableness of using all moral means of promoting its religious observance. The resolutions of the public meeting were communicated to the Right Honourable Lord Viscount Melbourne, the First Lord of the Treasury, and subsequently Sir C. E. Smith and two of the



secretaries, in company with a deputation from various bodies who had presented memorials, had an interview with his lordship and the Chancellor of the Exchequer upon the subject. The result of these combined efforts was that the proposed measures were not then adopted.

CHAPTER XII.

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At the Annual Meeting of the year 1839, a resolution was adopted by which the membership of the Union was confined to the ministers and teachers of those Sunday schools within a circle of five miles from the General Post Office, who had subscribed during the preceding year, ending the 31st March, not less than 4s. per annum to either of the four Auxiliary Unions in London or their Branches, together with subscribers to the Union of 10s. 6d. per annum and upwards, and donors of £10. 10s.

During this year an uniform penny postage was adopted by the government. One of the secretaries had in the previous year given evidence before a Committee of the House of Commons appointed to consider the plan suggested by Mr. Rowland Hill. In a communication made to the committee by the Westbury Union it was shown how this change might be made subservient to the interests of a large class of Sunday scholars. "At the last meeting of our Union it was strongly recommended to adopt an epistolary correspondence between the teachers and their scholars when they are separated from each other. Much good may be anticipated. It would prove beneficial to both

parties, and cement a bond of union which otherwise must, in many cases, be broken by the arrangements of providence. The New Post Office arrangements are admirably adapted to carry out this plan. One penny for a letter to or from one we feel an interest in, though at a distance of a hundred miles, is speaking loudly, and saying in this department, 'Occupy till I come.'"

Some endeavours were also made to render the Library and Reading Room more useful to the teachers of London and its vicinity. With this view several members of the committee consented to deliver familiar lectures on alternate Wednesday evenings. Conversations on the subject of each lecture were conducted on the Wednesday evening succeeding, and the measure was attended with gratifying results. The lectures were often delivered to crowded auditories, and the meetings for conversation were generally well attended. Some of these as well as of the previous lectures, were afterwards published, and still form part of the publications of the Union. The instruction addressed in the first instance to the members of the Library has thus been rendered accessible to Sunday school teachers generally. The titles of the lectures so published are, *The Polity and History of the Hebrews*, by the Rev. J. Hoppus, D.D.; *Hints on Self-Education*, by Mr. Daniel Benham; *Self-Culture in its relation to the Sunday School Teacher*, by Mr. John Mann; and *Senior Classes, their Importance, and the Mode of conducting them*, by W. H. Watson. This last has been reprinted in America by the New York Episcopal Methodist Sunday School Union. Two classes for the

study and practice of vocal sacred music—one for male teachers, and the other for females, were also established. The committee were greatly encouraged to proceed with this branch of their operations, by finding that not only were the present members of the library deriving great advantages from the opportunities afforded them of perusing the writings of the best authors in biblical literature, but that some of their old subscribers were now prosecuting their studies elsewhere, with a view to entering upon the christian ministry.

Repeated reference has already been made to the appeals presented to the committee of the Bible Society, that they would assist Sunday school teachers in their work, by supplying the scholars with copies of the Word of God, at reduced prices, and the ultimate reduction of the price to 2s. for Bibles, and 9d. for Testaments, but with a restriction preventing their being taken out of the respective schools, has also been mentioned. This restriction deprived the scholars of the opportunity of reading the Scriptures at home, and preparing for the Scripture subjects which were proposed by the teachers for their examination. It has also been mentioned, that in the year 1836, an application was made to the committee of the Bible Society, to remove that hindrance to the circulation of the Scriptures amongst Sunday scholars ; but which proved unsuccessful. The committee, however, felt so deeply convinced of the necessity of their desire being complied with, that in June, 1838, they requested their treasurer to present, personally, to the committee of the Bible Society, a renewal of the application. This he did, and two of the Secretaries also attended, but no

favourable result was at that time attained. The objections made were, that it would involve a greater expense than the funds of the society could bear, and would have an injurious effect on Bible Associations. The committee were still not disheartened, but, after the lapse of a few months, again brought the subject forward, and it having been several times discussed by the committee of the Bible Society, the difficulties were at length removed at the commencement of the year 1840. The request made was not only complied with, but exceeded, inasmuch as the resolution came to, was to supply Sunday scholars with the nonpareil Bible, at 1s. 6d., and the brevier Testament, at 6d. The committee had asked, also, for a pocket Bible, at a reduced price, but this was not granted. In reporting these circumstances to the Annual Meeting, the committee observed, that in thus reducing the prices of the Scriptures to Sunday scholars, "the committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society, have acted in a manner most calculated, under the Divine blessing, to carry into effect the objects for which that society was formed, so far as this country is concerned. The Scriptures thus circulated, will be read under the direction of pious teachers, they will be studied in connexion with the exercises of the school, and the truths therein contained will be impressed on the memory, and we trust will also sanctify the heart. In these days, when superstition, and infidelity, and immorality, are all presenting their claims to the attention of the young, how can we better secure them than by making them acquainted with that Holy Book, which,

while it makes known the depravity of human nature, with its cause and its results, at the same time points out the means by which that depravity, with all its attendant evils, may be removed, which teaches that 'the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,' and that 'godliness is profitable for all things, having the promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come.'"

The result of this reduction of price was to create such a demand, that, after expending about £14,000 in order to meet it, the committee of the Bible Society found it necessary to suspend the supply. It was thus clearly shewn, that if the price of the Scriptures was lowered, the purchasers of them would be greatly increased, and the abolition of the exclusive privilege of printing them in Scotland, and the consequent cheapness at which they were there sold, led to inquiries whether measures ought not to be adopted for procuring a reduction of price in this country. The University of Oxford, to whom, with that of Cambridge, and the Queen's printers, the privilege of printing the Scriptures is confined, influenced by public opinion, loudly and decisively expressed, announced their willingness to reduce the prices previously charged. The committee thought it their duty immediately to avail themselves of this opportunity of supplying Sunday schools with the sacred volume, at a reduced price. This, also, enabled the committee to provide for the scholars a pocket Bible. It is important that the scholars should be encouraged to purchase a Bible for themselves, which they can use at home, and which they may also bring, without inconvenience, to the school; thus rendering it unnecessary to provide Bibles for school

stock, and preserving the independence of the scholars. The committee were thus enabled to supply the nonpareil Bible, at 1s. 9d., the brevier Testament, at 9d., a pocket Bible, at 1s. 9d., and a reference Bible, for teachers, at 7s. Since that time the Bible Society have applied themselves diligently to the supply of the home population, and have published the nonpareil and pocket Bible at 10d., and the brevier Testament at 4d. ; and which the committee have cheerfully supplied to Sunday schools, without any charge for the expenses incurred by them. More recently, the Bible Society have issued a pocket reference Bible, at 1s. 3d. in roan, and 1s. 11d. in morocco, which hardly seems to leave any thing to be desired in this respect.

The Annual Meeting of this year was favoured with the company of Mr. Packard, one of the Secretaries of the American Sunday School Union, who attended as a representative from that Institution, and gave some particulars as to its operations, which were highly gratifying. The committee had the pleasure of holding much intercourse with him, and, in compliance with their request, he delivered a lecture on the state of religious and general education in the United States of America, first at the Literary Institution, Aldersgate-street, and afterwards at Finsbury Chapel. He also assisted at the Annual Meetings of several Local Unions, by which the interest of those meetings was increased, and his acquaintance with the details of the Sunday school system, as carried out in this country, was extended. The information thus obtained as to the state of religious education in the United States, was highly

valuable, and induced the committee to grant £100 in books, to the American Sunday School Union, to assist them in the establishment and improvement of Sunday schools in the vast central territory of North America, known as the Valley of the Mississippi. The committee testified their personal regard for Mr. Packard, and their sense of the kind manner in which he complied with their request to visit some of the Local Unions, by presenting him, on his taking leave of them, with a large paper copy of Bagster's Comprehensive Bible, suitably bound.

There were some new publications issued at the close of this year, which deserve attention. One was an Almanack and Diary, designed to assist teachers in preparing for their duties, which has not yet been appreciated as its merits deserve, but is gradually making its way; and with the improvements yearly introduced into it, will become an indispensable companion to every thoughtful teacher. Another publication, was a list of Reading Lessons, and subjects designed to guide teachers in their class exercises. It constituted a harmony of the Gospel narratives, with selections from the Acts and the Epistles. This was a very unpretending effort, but its results have been very remarkable. The need that existed for such a selection, was proved by the fact, that 62,000 copies of the first year's list were sold; a demand, that evidently pointed out the duty of the committee to continue the publication, and render it as acceptable as possible. But this was not all. The conductors of the Teacher's Magazine, published in that work a series of Notes on the subjects



thus selected, such Notes not being intended as a substitute for the private study of the teachers, but as a guide, which they might find very useful. The committee recommended those Notes to the attention of teachers; and were induced to consider, whether they ought not themselves to accompany their list of lessons with a series of Monthly Notes. They very soon came to the conclusion, that such a publication would be desirable and useful; but found great difficulties in carrying it out. The expense which must be incurred was one obstacle; the procuring a suitable individual to undertake the preparation of such Notes was another: and the necessity of avoiding any statements which might give offence to any of the various denominations of Christians, seemed an almost insurmountable obstacle. The committee, however, resolved to persevere: they felt the object to be so important, that it would justify an application of the funds of the Society to meet the expense—a Christian minister, in whom the committee could place the fullest confidence, undertook the laborious duty of preparing the Notes; and it is believed, that throughout the lengthened period during which this publication has now proceeded, the principal parts of both the Old and New Testaments have been brought under consideration, without these Notes having contained anything calculated to offend the sentiments of any Christian. They are carefully revised, previously to publication, by a sub-committee appointed for that especial purpose; and, contrary to the apprehensions entertained as to the work proving a burden upon the funds of the

Union, it has rather assisted them. The circulation has gone on steadily increasing year after year, and now amounts to nearly 17,000 copies per month. They are prepared, under an impression that they should not be read by the teachers to the scholars, but that the former should, in private, make themselves fully acquainted with their contents, and thus be able to communicate to the scholars such portion of the knowledge thus obtained, as circumstances may require. The Notes are divided into three parts. First,—The difficult words and phrases in the lesson are explained. Second,—The doctrines contained in it are stated and illustrated, occasionally by suitable anecdotes. Third,—Practical lessons are drawn from the subject. It has always been the earnest desire of the committee, that teachers should consider these Notes as not designed to supersede their own diligent study of the Word of God, but rather as assisting to make that study more effectual. This object would be more fully attained, if to such private meditation and research were added the advantage of a weekly meeting of teachers, for the purpose of going through the lessons for the ensuing Lord's day: in some cases the minister would be able to meet with the teachers; in others, the superintendent would preside. The interest and usefulness of such a meeting would be promoted by its being composed of the teachers of several contiguous schools, because a larger attendance would be secured, and the teachers of small schools could thus derive advantages of which they would otherwise, from their limited number, be deprived. To encourage and direct the formation and conduct such

meetings, a teachers' preparation class was opened at the Depository, presided over by one of the committee; and great numbers of such classes are now established in various parts of the country. Had the beneficial results of these efforts ended here, they would have afforded abundant cause for gratitude; but their influence has been much more widely extended. Selections of Scripture Lessons, and Monthly Notes upon them, are now prepared for the teachers of schools connected with the Church of England. Many schools belonging to the Wesleyan Methodists use lessons and notes adapted to their especial use. The Unions of Edinburgh and Glasgow have each adopted a similar plan; and more recently, the Sunday School Magazine, published at Paris, has introduced the system among the Sunday schools of France. Thus the object of the committee has been attained to an extent which they could not have anticipated, and the systematic study of the Scriptures is being diligently prosecuted by teachers, who have sought by prayerful and earnest preparation to make themselves fully acquainted with the lessons they are appointed to teach; thus obtaining for themselves an enlarged acquaintance with Scripture truth, and enabling them to impart to the scholars correct views on the great doctrines of the Gospel. The importance of this cannot be over estimated. The authority of the Scriptures is assailed in various directions: some would deny, or qualify, its divine original; others, who admit its authority, would withhold it from the people at large; while a large and increasing body insist upon its being accompanied with an authorized interpreta-

tion, lest its meaning should be misunderstood. Fatal results would attend the prevalence of either of these sentiments: the divine authority of the Scriptures must be upheld; and, as a natural consequence, the principle must be maintained, that it is sinful to withhold it from any of the sons of men, and that to require submission to any human interpretation of its meaning, is an unwarranted assumption. While the fullest acknowledgment is rendered for all the assistance which wise and holy men, in past ages, have given to the right understanding of the divine word; and while the Christian ministry should ever exert a powerful influence, it must never be forgotten, that it is the duty of every one to seek to understand the Scriptures; and that God will give such a measure of his Holy Spirit to those who seek, as will be sufficient to guide them into all the truth which is essential to their salvation. Especially is it the duty of the teachers of the young to seek this enlarged acquaintance with the word of God,—thus will their own souls be blessed, and thus will they be made an abundant blessing to those whom they instruct.

CHAPTER XIII.

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IN the year 1841 the committee had to mourn over the loss of an old and tried friend of the Union, Mr. George Lissant Olding, the superintendent of the Poultry Chapel School, who departed this life on the 25th of September. He became a member of the committee in 1823, and was elected to the office of a trustee of the society on the 15th December, 1831. He was diligent and faithful in the discharge of the duties he had thus undertaken; and for several years generally presided at the meetings of the committee. Mr. Robert Latter, one of the secretaries, was appointed trustee in his stead.

The attention of the committee was this year directed to the Hymn Book for Scholars, published by the Union, and a sub-committee was appointed to revise it. The result of that examination was the publication of a Hymn Book which, from the extensive alterations and additions made, may be considered a new work—110 hymns, which appeared unsuitable for children, having been omitted, and 156 others inserted, including several composed by Mr. Montgomery and other friends, expressly for this work, and making a total number in the work, as completed, of 291 hymns. Scripture mottoes

and the names of appropriate tunes were also prefixed to the hymns. It was thought desirable not to confine the selection exclusively to hymns of a devotional character; a few were, therefore, introduced, intended to be committed to memory, and a few others were retained, rather for the frequency of their use than their intrinsic merit. Of this work, 427,000 copies have been sold.

In the early part of the year 1842, the committee learnt that one of their number, Mr. W. J. Morrish, a teacher in the Paddington Chapel Sunday school, was conducting a large class of young children, with much convenience and advantage, by the use of an enlarged specimen of a box of moveable letters which had been long sold in the toy shops. They requested a deputation to visit the school, and report the result of the experiment; which was so satisfactory, that it was determined to construct similar boxes for sale. This matter, trifling as it may appear, occupied much time and attention, and involved some expenditure of money; but ultimately the committee found themselves able to offer to their fellow-teachers this assistance in a complete form. It is now so well known, that any attempt to describe the box itself, or the mode of using it, would be deemed superfluous. Its effects have been great; infant classes have been generally introduced into Sunday schools, by which means the children are brought into the schools at an earlier age than was formerly the case, and their elder brothers and sisters who were often kept at home in order to attend to them, can now accompany them to the schools. The instruction is more interesting; a large number can be taught

simultaneously by one or two teachers ; and in many cases, the scholars learn to read in the infant classes with so much fluency, that elementary books and classes become unnecessary, and schools consist of infant, scripture, and senior classes alone. This may interfere with the trade of the Union, by diminishing the sale of spelling and reading books ; but as the committee have no private interests to serve, they feel it their duty to recommend whatever will assist teachers in more efficiently and economically conducting their schools. They have laboured with some success in promoting the general establishment of infant classes in Sunday schools, and have since offered prizes for the best essays on the mode of conducting them. That which obtained the prize was written by Mr. Charles Reed, and has been published under the title of " The Infant Class in the Sunday School."

The committee still continued to watch with great interest the exertions made to cultivate a taste for vocal music, by the formation of classes at Exeter Hall, under the direction of Mr. John Hullah, giving every facility in their power to the making those exertions known to Sunday school teachers, very many of whom availed themselves of the advantages thus afforded ; and the committee cheerfully voted 20 guineas in aid of the expenses thus incurred. They were also induced to print the hymns and music to be sung at the Annual Meeting this year ; the effect produced by this harmonious combination of many thousand voices has induced the committee to continue the practice.

The report presented by the committee at this meeting,

adverted to the returns received from the four London Auxiliaries, as shewing that above two-thirds of the schools had lending libraries connected with them for the use of the scholars; that rather more than one-third had select classes for the benefit of elder scholars; that nearly two-thirds of the teachers were members of Christian churches; that one-third of the scholars attended morning school, and two-thirds attended afternoon school, on an average of three months. The committee then appointed, felt it their duty to take into consideration the attendance of scholars, feeling by no means satisfied that so large a proportion should be regularly absent, especially at morning school. A deputation was appointed to confer with the committee of each Auxiliary, and with the Superintendents and Secretaries of schools, and such conferences were accordingly held. Other meetings were subsequently convened, when the subject was fully and freely discussed. In some instances doubts were expressed as to the accuracy of the returns, but further enquiries proved their correctness; there were, certainly, many schools which had a more numerous attendance, but it was thus evident that other schools must be proportionally deficient in order to produce the general average result. It was found that there were but few schools in which the average morning attendance exceeded one-third of the scholars belonging to them, while in many it fell considerably short of that number. Some matters were suggested by way of explanation of the fact. It was urged, that in many cases the number of scholars on the books were overrated, by sufficient attention not being



paid to the removing the names of those scholars who had left the school ; that the late hour to which business is continued on Saturday night operated injuriously on scholars, parents and teachers ; that the length of the morning school combined with public worship, was objected to by some parents and scholars. These considerations certainly deserved attention, but several facts mentioned at the meetings seemed to prove that these circumstances were not sufficient to account for the deficient morning attendance.

Various remedies for the evil were suggested, referring to the parents of the scholars, to the scholars themselves, to the ministers, to the superintendents, and to the teachers ; and it will shew the value of an organization by which these facts and suggestions were brought to view, to place them on record for the guidance of teachers in their endeavours to render their labours more efficient.

With respect to the parents, it was recommended that they should be regularly visited by the teachers, in order to excite in them an interest in the instruction and regular attendance of their children, and to induce them to prepare them in time for morning school. It was also thought that a quarterly address to parents, connected with an examination of the scholars, would be beneficial. The scholars should be encouraged to get their clothes ready on Saturday, so as to leave as little as possible to be done on Sunday morning. There should also be more solemnity connected with admission to the school, and it would be desirable that their admission should take place at an earlier age, so as to

enable the elder scholars to bring their younger brothers and sisters with them, and thus prevent their being detained at home to take care of them. If the scholars were encouraged to enquire after their absent school-fellows, a beneficial result might be expected. Some striking facts were mentioned at the meetings, shewing the influence of the attendance of the minister in the school. The important duties which devolve upon the minister on the Lord's day render it difficult for him to interfere actively in the school duties, but if he could attend at the time for opening the school in the morning, he would find that the teachers and scholars would be alike ashamed of being absent, unless under the pressure of unavoidable circumstances. It is, however, upon the superintendent that the responsibility of conducting the school principally rests. He should feel this, and act up to his station. It is his duty to carry out the regulations of the school with affection but yet with firmness ; he must not be afraid of doing this, even should it compel him to use the language of reproof. While, however, much advantage would result from the preceding suggestions being acted upon, yet they will fail in securing the end designed, unless the teachers at large are faithful to their engagements. They cannot feel too deeply the importance of their work ; it is on their part a voluntary one. They profess, that love to the Saviour, and concern for the temporal, and especially for the eternal interests of the young, have prompted them to engage in it ; and having undertaken the office, it is no longer a matter of choice with them whether or not they shall discharge its duties. The secret of the non-

attendance of scholars will be too often found explained by the late and irregular attendance of the teachers. It seemed fully established, that when teachers are punctual the scholars will overcome the difficulties (which are great,) in the way of their attendance, and it was suggested, with reference to teachers, that they should make such arrangements as would prevent hindrances on Sunday morning: all of them should belong to the church with which the school is connected; there should be a union of feeling amongst them, and the instruction given in the school should be rendered more interesting.

Much benefit resulted from these discussions. The returns obtained for the last three months of this year, shewed that the morning attendance had increased to more than one half, and that the afternoon attendance considerably exceeded two-thirds of the scholars on the books.

CHAPTER XIV.

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WITH the year 1843 commenced a struggle on the subject of national education, into which the committee felt themselves bound to enter, and which brought upon the Union the severest trial which it had yet had to endure, and which seemed at one time to peril its very existence. Reference has already been made to the unsuccessful attempt to establish a national system of education. The government were frequently reproached for their inertness on this subject. John Foster, in his *Essay on the Evils of Popular Ignorance*, (p. 307, 2nd edition, 1821,) observed, "It is matter for never ending amazement that, during one generation after another, the presiding wisdom in this chief of christian and protestant states should have thrown out the living strength of that state into almost every mode of agency under heaven rather than that of promoting the state itself to the condition of a happy community of civilized beings. What stupendous infatuation, what disastrous ascendancy of the power of darkness, that this energy should have been sent forth to pervade all parts of the world in quest of objects to inspire and accomplish innumerable projects political and military, and to lavish itself even to exhaustion and fainting at

its vital source, on every alien interest, while here at home so large a part of the social body was in a moral and intellectual sense dying and putrefying over the land. And it was thus perishing for want of the vivifying principle of knowledge, while one-fifth of this mighty amount of exertion would have been sufficient to diffuse it into every corner and cottage of the island. Within its circuit a countless multitude were seen passing away their mortal existence little better in any way than mere sentient shapes of matter, and by their depravity inexpressibly worse, and yet this hideous fact had not the weight of the very 'dust of the balance' in the deliberation whether a grand exertion of the national vigour and resource could have any object so worthy (with God for the judge) as some scheme of foreign aggrandizement, some interference in remote quarrels, or avengement by anticipation of wrongs pretended to be foreseen, or the obstinate prosecution of some fatal career begun in the very levity of pride, by a decision in which some perverse individual or party in ascendancy had the influence to obtain a corrupt or deluded concurrence."

What, however, the state of parties seemed to render hopeless in England, was in process of years adopted as a sort of panacea for the ecclesiastical antipathies of the sister island. The government had for many years assisted by annual grants a voluntary institution known by the name of "The Kildare Place Society," which carried on a system of education with great energy and success. But the schools thus established were conducted on exclusively Protestant principles, and a

daily increasing spirit of opposition was raised against the public money being thus applied. Three courses were then open to the legislature—to assist exclusively Roman Catholic schools as well as exclusively Protestant ones, or to withdraw public assistance from all educational efforts, or to construct a plan by which the schools might be open to all without injury being done to the religious convictions of the parents. The feelings of the people generally revolted against the adoption of either of the first two alternatives, and the third, which seemed, under the peculiar circumstances of Ireland, the only one which could be carried out with any hope of success, was accepted by the Roman Catholic clergy in general and an influential portion of the established clergy and the Presbyterian ministers. In England this plan—a plan of government education, meddling with religion, and calculated to throw increased resources into the hands of the Roman Catholic priests—met with opposition chiefly from the established clergy, and was warmly supported by Protestant Dissenters. An ably conducted journal, the influence of which has been steadily used in support of the cause of education, and which has now become the most zealous opponent of government interference in education, wrote thus in 1839:—"We call upon the public to observe that if cavilling like the above" (the editor is referring to some resolutions adopted by the Wesleyan body) "is to succeed in obstructing the government plan, the effect will be altogether to prevent any aid being given by government to the education of the people. Are the public of opinion that this important

matter should be wholly neglected? Do they think we can prudently or safely neglect it? Do they think that government has no duty to perform towards the people, or towards itself, in regard to education? Is every attempt to aid in instructing the people, however guarded, however limited, however sedulously impartial, to be clamoured down by bigotry? Is every plan that may be devised, to be strangled, however confessedly just in its great principles, because there is a possibility of abuse?"

It is unnecessary to trace the history of the Irish Education Board, which, amidst many difficulties, has steadily pursued its labours. There cannot be a reasonable doubt that the schools thus established had amongst other benefits a tendency to mitigate the rancour of religious animosity in the sister island. But those benefits would probably have been greater had the established clergy generally entered more heartily into the project, so as to secure their due influence in the management of the schools. In consequence of their standing aloof at the outset, added to the numerical superiority of the Roman Catholic body, the latter has been the chief gainer by it. The number of schools under the superintendence of the Board has continued to increase, and at the last return there appeared to be in connection with it 4,704 schools, containing 520,401 scholars.

The government were sufficiently encouraged by the reception of the Irish plan to attempt some experiment of a similar description in England. Warned by the fate of previous efforts, which had failed through

attempting too much, Lord Melbourne's administration in 1839, to avoid alarming the apprehensive, confined themselves to the smallest measure and the most innocent mode of interference. They contented themselves with proposing to parliament a small annual grant of £30,000, to be distributed in aid of the expense of erecting school rooms. The object appeared not merely harmless, but even commendable. The regulations seemed just and reasonable. Every one admitted the propriety of government seeing that the grants thus made were properly applied, and to superintend their administration a committee of the privy council was constituted by an order of that council. Here again the measures of the government found their principal opponents in the clergy of the Established Church. An address, moved by the Archbishop of Canterbury, was presented to Her Majesty from the House of Lords, condemning the appointment of the committee of council. The grant proposed was, however, carried in the House of Commons by a small majority; the opposition made was gradually neutralized, and in subsequent years the amount granted was considerably increased. The Dissenting bodies generally did not then see any objection to the accepting the assistance thus proffered, and availed themselves of it to a considerable extent in the erection of school rooms.

The public mind having thus become familiarized with the interference of government, it was thought that the time had arrived when a more decided advance might be made towards establishing a national



system of education. Her Majesty's government therefore introduced into the House of Commons "A Bill for regulating the employment of children and young persons in factories, and for the better education of children in factory districts." This bill proposed to establish schools to be managed by a board of seven trustees, consisting of a clergyman (who was to be the permanent chairman), two churchwardens, and four individuals named by the justices of the peace. The catechism and liturgy of the Church of England were to be used in the schools, and the children were to attend the school three hours on a Sunday, and to attend public worship according to the rites of the Established Church. The masters of factories were to be prohibited from employing children without a certificate of attendance at these schools. The schools were to be erected and supported to some extent out of the poor rates, at the direction of the committee of privy council for education. The parents of children neglecting to attend school were to be subject to penalties. The bill also provided that National and British Schools which the government inspectors declared to be efficiently conducted, should be entitled to give school certificates to the children attending such schools, and those children were to be exempted from learning the catechism and liturgy, and attending public worship, whose parents objected on religious grounds.

As soon as this measure was brought to the notice of the committee, they examined it with a view to ascertain its probable influence on the institutions over which it was their duty to watch. They found that the provi-

sions of the Bill would be applicable to every place in Great Britain, which contained any building in which steam, water, or any other mechanical power, should be used to move or work any machinery employed in any way in the manufacture of cotton, wool, linen, silk, flax, tow, hemp, or jute,—and that the schools proposed to be established were intended to receive not only the children employed in factories, but all other children who might desire admission. A very large proportion of the youthful population might therefore be expected to find their way into them, and would be thus withdrawn from the Sunday schools, in which their religious instruction was being conducted with advantages which would not be realized under the proposed system. The committee, therefore, presented a petition to the House of Commons, setting forth the advantages attending the Sunday school system, and their apprehensions as to the injurious influence which would be exercised upon it, by the provisions of the Government Bill—they submitted that the requiring the scholars to attend the schools on Sundays, was unnecessary, and inexpedient, and inconsistent with the great principles of religious liberty, and therefore prayed that the clause of the Bill, which required the attendance of the scholars on Sundays, might be expunged. It will be observed that the petition was confined to one single point of objection, not because the committee were insensible to other grounds of complaint, but because they deemed it most consistent with their character, as a representative body, appointed to watch over the interest of Sunday schools, to protest distinctly against that part of the Bill which

directly affected these institutions, leaving their constituents at liberty to act in respect to the measure, in other respects, as they might themselves think right.

The committee did not, however, satisfy themselves with merely preparing the petition. They transmitted a copy of it, with a copy of the Bill, and a letter pointing out its injurious influence on Sunday schools, to every Union in the country, requesting that a meeting of the respective committees might be held, to take the subject into their consideration. The result of these communications was the holding a great number of meetings, in various parts of the country, at which it was determined to present petitions against the Bill.

The petition of the committee was presented to the House of Commons, by Benjamin Hawes, Esq., and, at his request, read at length at the table of the House. In the course of the debate which took place on that evening, Sir James Graham stated that it was not intended to compel those children to attend the school on Sundays, whose parents objected on religious grounds. This explanation, although satisfactory to a certain extent, fell very far short of meeting with the wishes of the committee. There is a superiority in the system of gratuitous Sunday school teaching, which would render it a matter of regret if any children were prevented from partaking of its benefits. It was evident that such must be the case if schools were established according to the provisions of this Bill. The scholars, in Sunday schools connected with the Church of England, would be withdrawn to those new schools, because their parents would not be able to state that they

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objected, on religious grounds, to the instruction imparted. But a very large number of the parents of Sunday scholars do not feel sufficient interest in the instruction of their children to induce them to make the objection which would be necessary to exempt them from attendance at these schools. And many dissenting parents, also, would be unwilling, or afraid to make an objection, which might be displeasing to those who had the care of their children during the week. Thus great numbers of Sunday scholars would lose the benefit of the instruction they were receiving from gratuitous teachers.

The petition thus presented to the House of Commons from the committee, succeeded in drawing attention to the injurious tendency of the Bill in reference to Sunday schools. One of the public journals which had warmly advocated the system proposed in the Bill, in commenting upon the debate which took place upon its second reading, made the following remarks, which are gratifying as shewing the impression produced by the statements contained in the petition.

“ Another change, which is called for in the Bill, was pointed out by Sir George Grey. The children belonging to the church, attending the new schools, are to be compelled to attend on Sundays. This is an arrangement bad in itself, and one which will interfere injuriously with the existing Sunday schools. The committee of the Sunday School Union have published a petition on the subject, which states very clearly and temperately the objections to such a regulation, and which is worthy of the best attention of government and

parliament. The Sunday school system is attended with indirect advantages even more important than the amount of instruction which it imparts. It binds different classes of society together, by the strongest feelings of benevolent sympathy on one side, and grateful attachment on the other. We have no reliance on the voluntary principle as regards the general education of the people, but that principle is the life and essence of the Sunday school. There are at present, nearly 17,000 Sunday schools, in England and Wales, attended by upwards of a million and a half of scholars. By far the larger number of these schools are conducted by unpaid teachers. Young men and young women, some belonging to the poorer and others to the wealthier classes, regularly devote a considerable portion of the Sunday to the religious instruction of the poor. No fame attends these exertions, and there can be no motive for them but a sense of duty, or the pleasure of a benevolent work. Such exertions could not be purchased by money, nor could an Act of Parliament call them into existence. Sunday schools might be established by law, but law could not make Sunday school teaching what it now is, a labour of love : and it could not, therefore, create the affectionate relations which now subsist between the teacher and the taught. Those who have seen nothing of such schools can hardly conceive the strong and warm attachment which grows up in the bosoms of poor children for a kind and judicious teacher. Feelings of this sort are of inestimable value in cementing the different orders of society together, especially when so many circumstances tend to

separate them. An interference with the present Sunday schools, therefore, would be most improper and injudicious. Many children, who would be considered members of the Church, now attend Sunday schools, where they are instructed in the tenets which the church holds in common with Dissenters. To compel them to withdraw from such schools, to break off their connexion with their favourite teachers, and to discourage the admirable voluntary exertions which have done so much, would be an evil, which, we trust, the government will see the necessity of avoiding. The new schools may be opened on Sundays for such as choose to come to them, but the Sunday instruction will be most effectual, when it is voluntarily given and voluntarily received."

As the nature of the educational clauses in the Bill became better known, the opposition to them increased and strengthened; and in compliance with many urgent appeals, the committee convened a general meeting of the Union on the 12th of April. At that meeting, over which Charles Hindley, Esq., M.P., presided, the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:—

I.

That this meeting of Sunday school teachers desire to bear witness, from their personal experience and observation, to the vast importance of the present system of Sunday schools, in promoting the cause of evangelical religion, of sound morals, of civil security, and of social improvement. These beneficial results, they believe to have an intimate connexion with the principle of employing a voluntary and unpaid agency, by which a parental interest is often created on the part of the

teacher, and a filial affection awakened in the heart of the scholar;—and which is also eminently a means of moral and religious impression, as well as of literary instruction. These important advantages a paid agency could never realize. It is, therefore, the deliberate conviction of this meeting, that the adoption of any scheme of national education which shall have the effect of weakening, superseding, or destroying the existing system of Sunday schools, will be a great national calamity.

## II.

That this meeting, feeling deeply the importance of general education, would rejoice in the greater facilities which might thus be afforded for the success of Sunday schools in their higher objects; but they do not believe that the means proposed in the “Bill for regulating the employment of children and young persons in Factories, and for the education of children in Factory Districts,” are at all adequate to this end :—because,

1. This Bill violates the principles of religious liberty and christian union, by placing the sole superintendence, and practically, the entire management of education, in the hands of only *one* section of the christian church; by which it would be likely to increase existing religious differences, rather than to promote kind and christian rivalry in the work of doing good to all.

2. It confers great and unprecedented powers, associated with inadequate control, and practical irresponsibility, which have a natural tendency to produce oppression, neglect, and abuses without number.

3. The clauses which are intended to shield dissenters

against encroachments on the rights of conscience, would be inefficient in practice; because, on the one hand, there would be power, influence, the secular arm, and the public purse; on the other, there would generally be timidity, dependency, and poverty.

4. Schools established under such unfair advantages, would frequently fall under the superintendence of those who conscientiously disapprove of all lay agency in religious teaching, and who would, therefore, use all the power and influence with which they would be invested, to supersede and destroy existing Sunday schools.

### III.

That if, under ordinary circumstances, the adoption of such a scheme of national education should be regarded as a national calamity, its results, under the extraordinary circumstances of the present time, ought to be viewed with much greater alarm and dread; inasmuch as the powers given by the proposed Bill would, in a vast and increasing number of instances, be wielded by a restless, active, and enthusiastic party, who repudiate the name of Protestant; deny, pervert, or conceal the doctrines of the Reformation, and leave no efforts untried, and no class of society unassailed, in order to promote the growth, progress, and universal prevalence of their religious sentiments.

### IV.

That these resolutions be communicated by the chairman to the Secretary of State for the Home Department; that copies be sent to the Members of both Houses of Parliament; and addressed, by advertisement,



or otherwise, to Sunday school teachers throughout the kingdom, recommending them to petition Parliament, without delay, against all those provisions of the Bill which directly, or indirectly, tend to the injury or ruin of existing Sunday schools; praying that they may never become a part of the law of Great Britain.

The measures which had been adopted by the committee were reported to the Annual Meeting, over which Lord Morpeth (now the Earl of Carlisle) presided, and were cordially approved by the meeting, which these discussions rendered more than usually exciting. The committee, then appointed, were instructed to watch the further progress of the Bill, with especial reference to its probable influence on Sunday schools; and they accordingly, at their first meeting, examined, with care, the amendments which had been made in it with a view to disarm opposition. They were gratified by finding that, in compliance with the prayer of the petition presented to the House of Commons by the previous committee, the clause requiring the attendance on Sundays of the scholars in the schools proposed to be established, was expunged, and such attendance was left perfectly free. It became, therefore, a matter of anxious enquiry with the committee whether, or not, under these circumstances, they were justified in further interference; but they came to the conclusion, that the results of the measure, even in its amended form, must be prejudicial, if not fatal, to all Sunday schools conducted by gratuitous teachers: that if these new schools were well conducted, as might be fairly expected, from their command of pecuniary resources,


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they would gradually destroy all other schools, and that the scholars would be induced to attend on Sundays, and thus lose the advantages which the present Sunday school system affords. The committee, therefore, determined to continue their opposition: they transmitted to the country Unions a statement of their own views of the injurious tendency of the amended Bill, and requested them to give it a careful consideration. They also determined to present a petition to the House of Commons, stating their objection to the measure; and they convened a general meeting of the members of the Union on Thursday, June 13th, when Chas. Hindley, Esq., M.P., presided, and a series of resolutions were adopted, embodying the objections entertained to the Bill, as amended. The measure itself, which had excited such general alarm amongst the teachers and friends of Sunday schools, was shortly afterwards withdrawn by the government, who thought it prudent to wait for a more convenient season for prosecuting their plans for carrying out a system of national education. The following resolutions were recorded by the committee in reference to that withdrawal:

1. That on the withdrawal of the educational clauses of the Factory Education Bill, the committee of the Sunday School Union wish to offer to the Sunday school teachers of the metropolis and of the country, the expression of their high satisfaction at the promptitude with which they arose to exertion as soon as the cry was raised that Sunday schools were in danger; at the zeal with which they laboured in the calling toge-

ther of public meetings, and in the procuring of numerous-signed petitions to the legislature; at the untiring energy displayed in all their public and private efforts; and at the readiness with which they returned to these various and arduous duties, when another expression of public opinion was required in relation to the amended Bill. They also convey to them their warm congratulations on the successful result of these efforts, and on the constitutional deference to public opinion displayed by the government. But they would chiefly cherish a deep feeling of gratitude to Divine Providence for this happy averting of the threatened danger; and they trust, that publicly, in every suitable manner, whether at the teachers' usual prayer meetings, or at special meetings held for that purpose, their friends will join them in the expression of their thanksgivings to Almighty God.

2. That the thanks of this committee are due, and are hereby given, to all those Members of Parliament who, with great courtesy and kindness, have presented petitions against the abandoned clause; but in an especial manner to Charles Hindley, Esq., for taking charge of an unprecedented number of these petitions, for giving his time and attention to this service, and for the able manner in which he presided over the special public meetings held by the Sunday School Union; and also to Benjamin Hawes, Esq., for presenting and supporting the first petition from this committee; and to various other Members of Parliament, for their services at the numerous public meetings held by the Auxiliary







W. L. Lloyd  
1823





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Unions, and for their liberal advocacy in the Commons House of Parliament.

3. That this committee would reiterate the expression of their deep anxiety for the extension of popular education by all appropriate means. But especially it is their desire and hope that this concern will be practically manifested by their friends in the establishment of additional Sunday schools, in the active promotion and support of suitable day schools, in the employment of a larger body of carefully selected teachers, in the more efficient supervision of the schools, and especially in greater diligence and perseverance in the private and devotional preparation of Sunday school teachers for their regular and ordinary duties in the class. It is only in the use of such means that we can hope, by the blessing of God, more abundantly to succeed in extending the invaluable benefits of religious instruction.

In the course of this year, Mr. Lloyd expressed his desire that his name should no longer appear as one of the secretaries to the Union, in consequence of his entire inability to take any part in its proceedings. In complying with this request, the committee felt it their duty to record the following resolution:—

That this committee having received repeated intimation from Mr. W. F. Lloyd, that his state of health precluded him from taking any part in public business, and he having, on that account, again tendered his resignation as one of the secretaries of the Sunday School Union; and this committee having reluctantly accepted the resignation of Mr. Lloyd, beg to express their sincere sympathy with him in his continued indis-



position; and they most gratefully record the high sense they entertain of the eminent services which, under Divine Providence, he for so many years cheerfully and efficiently rendered in the extension of the influence and usefulness of the Sunday School Union, together with the great benefits which, through his advice, activity, and energy, he has been the means of conferring upon Sunday schools, both in England and foreign countries.

They also requested Mr. Lloyd to accept the office of honorary member of the committee, and thus retain some connexion with a society, to the interests of which many of his earliest years were devoted. Mr. William Groser, who had been for several years a useful member of the committee, as a representative from the North Auxiliary, and had long acted as Secretary to the sub-committee, by whom the Library and Reading Rooms were superintended, was appointed to fill the vacancy caused by Mr. Lloyd's resignation.

CHAPTER XV.

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THE stirring events of the past year did not divert the committee from giving attention to objects coming more directly within the sphere of their duties. The arrangements made on the retirement of Mr. Wilson, from the service of the Union, for visiting the country Unions, have been already mentioned, and much benefit had resulted from this fraternal intercourse. Endeavours were now made to conduct it more systematically; not confining the visits to places where Unions already existed, but extending them, so far as the committee were able, to all places where it was thought they might be beneficial. The following was the plan adopted; two members of the committee left London on Saturday afternoon, and devoted the next day to the visitation of as many schools as they found practicable. On the Monday or Tuesday afternoon the deputation met the teachers, and a free and friendly conference took place on various points connected with the extension and improvement of the Sunday school system. These meetings were not intended to be public, because it was desired they should be of a practical character; but they were largely attended; excited much interest in those present,

and produced beneficial results. The first visit on this plan was to Leicester in January, 1844, and it has been followed by more than 350 others, in which many thousand teachers in various parts of England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland, have received, with expressions of great satisfaction, the deputations of the committee. The character of the meetings has been modified by circumstances, but generally the plan laid down at the commencement by the committee has been adhered to ; and although it has involved a considerable sacrifice of time and labour on the part of the committee, and a large expenditure of money from the funds of the Union, yet there can be little doubt that the advantages realized have been fully commensurate. The following instances will furnish specimens of the results.

At one of the places visited, the committee were informed that since the visit of the deputation, in one school, a senior girls' class had been formed, and one was in progress for the senior boys : in another school, two boxes of moveable letters had been purchased ; boys' and girls' senior classes had been commenced ; the teachers had consented to attend every Sabbath, instead of alternately, as before, and the teaching was continued during the whole of the Sabbath afternoon instead of requiring the scholars to attend Divine worship as well as in the morning. The Secretary of one of the country Unions wrote in reference to the visit from a deputation. "Our Sunday School Union, before your coming amongst us, was lifeless and almost extinct ; but now the monthly and quarterly meetings are enquired after with an interest never felt before." The committee of a Wes-

leyan Methodist school, in another place, said, in their annual report, "They trust that the recent visit of the deputation from the Sunday School Union to this city, will have a beneficial effect. Already the minds of the teachers are aroused to a consideration of the best means of giving efficiency to every department of Sabbath school instruction, and with this view three teachers in one school and two in another, have recently abandoned the alternating system, and attend every Sabbath." The committee of one Country Union, reported:—"In twelve schools infant classes have been established, in which nearly 1,000 infants receive religious instruction. This is a gratifying result of the visit of the deputation from the London Sunday School Union, by whom this step was first urged. These were individual instances, but the general results have been seen in the formation of new Unions; in the renewed activity of those previously existing; and in an increased demand for the publications of the Union." The course thus adopted by the committee has led teachers through the country, to feel the increasing importance of mutual conference as a means of improving the Sunday school system. Hence, the committee of the Leeds Union invited deputations, not only from London, but also from Manchester, Halifax, and Hull, to attend their Annual Meeting, which was thus rendered deeply interesting. The committee of the Manchester Union took a still bolder step, by summoning representatives from all the surrounding towns, to a conference, which commenced at ten o'clock in the morning and continued, with necessary intervals for refreshment, until ten o'clock at night. It was attended by 300

representatives from thirteen towns, belonging to fifteen different evangelical denominations, who had under their superintendence 148 schools, having 5,895 teachers, and 45,953 scholars. Short papers were read on various practical subjects, followed by a limited discussion on each. The pleasure and profit arising from these gatherings have caused the examples thus set to be followed on subsequent occasions, and in other parts of the country.

The committee did not limit themselves to this personal intercourse with their fellow-teachers, which would, of necessity, be comparatively small. They desired to be able to keep up a constant communication with them; and with this view, the publication of a cheap periodical seemed desirable. One difficulty which presented itself, was the fear that such a proceeding might injure the Teacher's Magazine, in whose welfare the committee felt deeply interested. The circumstances under which that publication originated have been already detailed, and although it has always been conducted independently of the Union, yet its pages have ever been open to the committee for the communication of intelligence, and they have watched its growing success with pleasure. After frequent deliberations the committee came to the conclusion, that it would be possible to establish a new work without seriously, if at all, injuring the existing Teacher's Magazine; and with this conviction **THE UNION MAGAZINE FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS**, was commenced on the 1st of January, 1844. The price was fixed at twopence, to enable every teacher to possess a copy, an opportunity, however, of which too few have hitherto availed them-

selves. Every endeavour is made to render the work useful to teachers; this necessarily prevents it from being interesting to general readers, but should enhance its value in the estimation of thoughtful, pains-taking labourers in the Sunday school work. It still maintains its ground, and will ultimately secure a much larger circulation than it has yet attained.

The attention of the committee having been directed to the Teacher's Hymn Book, they appointed a sub-committee to revise it with a view to the preparation of a new edition. It will afford an illustration of the labour connected with the publications of the Union, to mention, that besides examining various collections of hymns at their own homes, the sub-committee held thirty-six meetings at the Depository, and after perusing more than 10,000 hymns, they selected 181 (comprising forty-nine from the former edition,) as being the most suitable to constitute the Union Hymn Book for Teachers. It was thought desirable that the general form and arrangement of the collection should resemble that of the Hymn Book for Scholars, which had given general satisfaction. Texts and the names of tunes were prefixed to the hymns. The publication of this Hymn Book completed the series of works which the committee had been for some years engaged in preparing, with a view to the improvement of the devotional exercises in Sunday schools; including—The Union Tune Book, of which five separate editions may be obtained—The Union Harmonist, in two separate editions—The Juvenile Harmonist—The Union Hymn Book for Scholars, an edition of which is also published with an

accompanying tune to each hymn—and The Union Hymn Book for Teachers. At a subsequent period, an Infant Scholar's Hymn Book was added to the list, to meet a necessity created by the great increase of infant classes in Sunday schools.

The withdrawal of the Factory Districts' Education Bill did not cause the feelings which had been excited by its introduction to subside, and the committee, upon whom now devolved the management of the Union's affairs, were exposed to a scene of trial which had never before occurred during the existence of the society. It will be recollected that in the schools proposed to be established, the Church of England catechism was required to be taught, and although provision was made for exempting scholars from learning that catechism whose parents objected on religious grounds, it was considered probable that from various causes but few parents would feel disposed to avail themselves of this privilege, and that practically the catechism would be taught generally to the scholars. The attention of the christian public had been already directed with anxiety to the earnestness with which many of the clergy of the Church of England were inculcating the sentiment that baptismal regeneration was a doctrine of that church, and one which it was their duty to teach with diligence. One of the grounds on which they rested that opinion was the statement contained in the catechism where, in answer to the question, "Who gave you this name?" the party catechised is required to answer, "My godfathers and godmothers, in my baptism, wherein I was made a

member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." The strong conviction felt that such a doctrine was opposed to the word of God, and was of fatal consequence to the spiritual interests of man, had added much to the intensity of the hatred felt towards the government measure, by which it was believed this dogma would be still more generally taught. Such was not the ground, it was true, on which the opposition of the Union had been based. The resistance of the committee would have been quite as firm had any other catechism been selected, or even if catechisms had been altogether excluded. They opposed the establishment of the proposed schools because they conceived that insensibly the scholars would be drawn into them on Sundays, that thus they would be deprived of the gratuitous labours of their present teachers, for which loss no adequate compensation would be found in the instruction of the conductors of those schools. But from the circumstances adverted to, general attention was drawn to the catechism itself, and the question was raised in various quarters whether it was proper that it should be published and sold by the Union, and the committee were themselves compelled to entertain the question, by a memorial being presented to them from one of the associated schools, requesting them to discontinue the sale of the Church of England catechism. It was at once perceived that this desire could not be complied with unless the committee were prepared to abandon the sale of all catechisms the doctrines of which they could not unitedly recommend, because the exclusion of one



from the catalogue on the ground of its containing error would render the committee answerable for the sentiments contained in the others. They, therefore, referred the question to the consideration of a numerous sub-committee, by whom it was carefully examined, and on their report the following resolutions were adopted at the meeting of the committee in August, 1843:—

That this committee having carefully considered whether or not the society should continue to publish or sell the Church of England, Assembly's, and Baptist Catechisms, now placed upon its catalogue, are of opinion that no alteration should be made in this respect, because the sale of such catechisms at its Depository is in strict accordance with its constitution and rules, has been continued for a considerable period, forms an important part of its trade, affords facilities to those who purchase its other publications or Sunday school requisites, calls for no compromise of individual religious sentiment, and is an example of mutual forbearance which serves to strengthen the existing union among the different religious bodies of which it is composed.

That a notice be prefixed to the list of catechisms in the catalogue. 'That the committee of the Sunday School Union keep these catechisms on sale for the convenience of Sunday school teachers, but do not express any opinion on the theological sentiments contained therein.' Notwithstanding the adoption of these resolutions, the agitation still continued, and in order to ascertain the views of their constituents the com-

mittee invited a conference with the committees of the four London Auxiliaries. At this meeting the proceedings of the committee were stated, and as many present expressed a desire to state their views, the conference was adjourned, and three subsequent meetings were held, in the course of which the question was very fully discussed. About 200 persons, on an average, attended the conferences, of whom 51 took part in the proceedings, 23 were in favour of the sale of catechisms being continued, as usual, and 28 expressed their desire that the sale of them should be discontinued. It was, however, generally agreed, that if one catechism was removed from the catalogue, on the ground of its containing error, the whole must be examined, and such only retained which the committee could unitedly recommend. The proceedings at these meetings, as well as other communications, gave evidence that the sentiments of the members of the Union were much divided on the question, and the committee did not feel at liberty to alter a long-established practice of the society, which they did not themselves consider wrong, without some distinct proof that such alteration was called for by a large majority of their constituents. They, therefore, reported the facts to the General Meeting, at which a resolution was adopted,

“That the committee for the last year having left undecided the question relative to the continued sale of denominational catechisms, this meeting of the constituent body hereby recommend the committee, now chosen, to discontinue, at the earliest practicable period, the publication and sale, at the Union Depository, of all denominational formularies.”

It will be perceived that this resolution did not in any way trench upon the catholic character of the Union. The sale of denominational formularies had always constituted an exception to the principle adhered to with respect to all the other publications of the society; but was considered to be justified on the grounds already stated. The committee, on taking that resolution into consideration, did not, therefore, feel any difficulty in carrying it out, whatever opinion they might themselves entertain as to its necessity or expediency. The catechisms in the society's catalogue were examined, and the publication and sale of the following were discontinued:—The Church of England Catechism, the Baptist Catechism, with and without Proofs, the Assembly's Catechism, with and without Proofs, Brown's Short Catechism, Watts's Second Catechism, with and without Proofs, and the Collects. The effect of this measure on the trade of the Union was more injurious than at first anticipated. The sale of catechisms amounted to about 170,000 copies yearly, and a general impression prevailed that the sale of all catechisms would be discontinued. The demand for those remaining on the catalogue was much lessened. The committee, however, continued to publish and sell the Little Child's Catechism, the Milk for Babes, Dr. Watts's First and Historical Catechisms. They also kept for sale the Catechisms of Scripture Biography and of Scripture History, Lloyd's Bible Catechism, Lloyd's Catechism on the Evidences of the Bible, in easy rhyme, and Lloyd's Catechism on the Principal Parables of the New Testament. At a subsequent period

an attempt was made to prepare catechisms which might be properly published by the Union in the place of Dr. Watts's Second Catechism, and the Assembly's Catechism; but so many difficulties arose in the carrying out the design, that it has not hitherto been prosecuted.

The advantages which had been found to result from the use of the box of moveable letters, in rendering the acquisition of the art of reading more easy to the younger scholars, drew the attention of the committee, and led them to examine, with care, in what way it was that the scholars were so much assisted. It appeared very much to arise from the largeness of the type used, and from the letters and words being set up individually, so that the attention of the scholars was more completely fixed, and the forms of the letters were more readily and firmly imprinted on the memory. The suggestion then arose whether the principle could not be advantageously adopted with respect to the class books published by the Union. It was true that the necessity for such elementary works was being greatly diminished by the extension of general education, which rendered the teaching of the art of reading less essential; but there was still found a very large number of scholars whom it was important to assist. In addition to which, it should ever be remembered that it is most desirable that young persons should not only be able to read, but to do so with fluency; otherwise they will feel a reluctance, in future life, to take up a book when the reading, and especially the reading of it aloud, is attended with difficulty. The committee thought they should be

doing well, therefore, to apply the same principle to the class books. The First Class Book was printed in a type somewhat smaller than the moveable letters. Thus, instead of the scholars being removed at once from the use of a very large type to that of an ordinary book, the change was but small, the page contained few lines, and the unpractised eye of the scholar was not confused by a large body of type. One instance occurred to illustrate the wisdom of the alteration. An application having been made for the admission of a new scholar into a Sunday school, the superintendent, in order to ascertain whether the child could read, put into his hands the old edition of the First Class Book, which he was unable to decipher. The improved edition was then put before him, and he was able to read it without difficulty. The Second Class Book was also printed in a type somewhat smaller than the First, thus gradually bringing the scholar forward, until after having passed through the gradations of the letter box, the First and Second Class Books, he was able, without difficulty, to use the Third Class Book, which remained unaltered. The First Class Book was now also printed in a set of large lessons, mounted on boards for collective teaching. An adult reading book was prepared, and published, in which the type of the lessons is graduated in like manner, and in which the syllables are divided, and some other assistance given to those who have unhappily arrived at adult age without having acquired the art of reading.

CHAPTER XVI.

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IN the winter of the year 1845, a monthly course of lectures was delivered at Falcon Square Chapel, by ministers who kindly consented, at the request of the committee, to take a share in this labour. The lectures were numerous attended, and were carried on for several successive seasons with great benefit to the teachers who were present.

Amongst the visits paid this year, by deputation, from the committee, was one to Dublin and the North of Ireland, occasioned by intimations given that they would be cordially welcomed by the teachers there. Crowded and interesting meetings were accordingly held in Dublin, Newry, Derry, Coleraine, and Belfast. At Dublin, the meeting was attended by five clergymen of the established church. At other places, visited by similar deputations, a like spirit of brotherly love was manifested; at Dowlais, the clergyman of the parish entertained the deputation at his house, and did all in his power to promote the object of their visit; and at Walsall, the vicar took the chair at the meeting, and, with his curate, entered heartily into the views of those who desired that a union of the teachers should be formed.

The interesting engagements in which one of the deputations took part, at Halifax, in June, 1846, deserve particular notice. So much pleasure was received from the celebration of the Jubilee of Sunday schools in that town, in 1831, that it has been repeated since then at intervals of about five years. Its third repetition was fixed for Whit-Tuesday, and the attendance of a deputation from the committee was requested. The schools were accordingly visited on the Sunday, and large assemblages of them afterwards addressed. A conference of teachers was held on the Monday evening, and on the Tuesday the great festival took place. The Sunday scholars gathered in their respective school-rooms, where some of them partook of breakfast. At ten o'clock the shops were closed, and the stream of population flowed towards the Piece Hall, a building enclosing an open area of about 260 feet by 220. The Hall consists of open galleries of two, and in some parts three galleries; at the back of which are small shops in which stuffs and other similar goods, manufactured in the town, are exposed for sale on the market days: into these galleries the public were admitted as spectators, at prices varying from 2s. 6d. to 6d. each, according to the eligibility of the position. More than 6,000 persons availed themselves of the permission, and upwards of £230 was received, which (after providing for the expenses of the meeting, and for a grant to the Sunday School Union) was divided amongst the schools which attended, in proportion to the number of scholars. At eleven o'clock, the schools of the town and neighbourhood commenced entering the area which was

turfed and sloped gently from west to east. Many of the country schools were headed by bands of music, which afterwards took their station in a spacious orchestra erected on the east side of the area; four hymns were then sung, accompanied (except in one verse of each hymn) by more than 200 wind-instruments. Lord Morpeth arrived during the singing of the last hymn; and after the engagements had been closed with the National Anthem, addressed a few words to the assembled multitude. In the evening, his lordship presided at a meeting of 1200 teachers who had taken tea together, after the labours of this very delightful festival.

A work, of very considerable interest and importance, was published in the year 1847. It originated in an application from the Manchester Union, urging the desirableness of providing a book of instruction for Sunday school teachers. The committee thought the best mode of securing the object aimed at, was to offer the sum of £100 for the best book of practical instruction for Sunday school teachers. The work was intended to comprehend a careful review of the qualifications, mental, moral, and religious, which should be found in the Sunday school teacher, and of his duties to himself, his class, and society; descriptions of the best mode of conducting infant, elementary, Scripture, and senior classes in Sunday schools, with the peculiar qualifications requisite in the teachers of each—general government of the schools—directions for conducting the various meetings of teachers—an examination of the religious services connected with Sunday schools—instructions for the establishment of Sunday schools, and



a concise view of their important relation to the scholars, the teachers, the church, and society in general. These various subjects to be accompanied with numerous illustrations, taken as far as practicable from actual observation and experience. When the various essays sent in by the competitors had been read by the adjudicators, they had not any hesitation in awarding the prize to Mrs. Davids, the wife of the Rev. T. W. Davids, of Colchester. The Essay was published under the title of "The Sunday School," and it is not too much to say that while exception will be taken to some statements in it, yet no other work will be found to present an equally ample development of the Sunday school in all its various relations, and that no Sunday school library can be considered complete without possessing a copy.

The subject of the general education of the people now again occupied attention. The government had succeeded in inducing the parliament gradually to increase the amount placed at the disposal of the education committee of the privy council, and that body now thought they might take a very decided step towards bringing the education of the people under governmental control. Warned by the fate which had attended the Factory Districts' Education Bill, they carefully abstained from consulting parliament as to the course intended to be pursued, but agreed to certain Minutes which provided for the employment of the money which might be voted in aid of education, in a mode very different from that in which former grants had been applied. Those grants had been ex-

pended in aiding the erection of school buildings, the government retaining the right of inspecting the schools, but without interfering in their management. By these new minutes it was proposed that the committee of the privy council on education, should give salaries to monitors and apprenticed pupil teachers; that gratuities and pensions should be given to schoolmasters; and that means should be adopted for providing for the further instruction and future support of the pupil teachers after their apprenticeship had been completed; the committee were also to establish industrial schools. The adoption of these plans was justified on the ground that the state of education of the people of England was very unsatisfactory; that voluntary efforts to improve it had failed, and would never be sufficient to meet the necessity; and that therefore it was the duty of the state to interpose its aid. As might be supposed, these propositions did not meet with universal concurrence, and a renewed conflict took place between the advocates of state-supported education on the one hand, and those who thought that voluntary efforts were adequate to meet the necessity, on the other. The committee of the Union were strongly urged to take a part in the strife, and to lend the aid which their organization presents, to the exertions made to prevent the minutes being carried into operation. On careful consideration, however, it did not appear that these measures, whatever might be their effect on daily schools, had such a bearing on Sunday schools as would justify interference on the part of the committee. The teachers connected with the Union

are combined for a specific object, with a distinct understanding that they are not thereby committed to any measures not directly connected with that object, while at the same time no restraint is placed on their individual action. The institution has prospered by a strict adherence to these principles, and the day on which they may be violated will be an evil one for the Union, inasmuch as they constitute the only safe ground on which such an association can rest. Among the publications issued in the course of these discussions, was a semi-official pamphlet in explanation and defence of the minutes of council, entitled "The School in its Relation to the State, the Church, and the Congregation;" in which the Sunday school was adverted to in a manner evidencing that its value was becoming more apparent. The writer says:—

Towards the close of the eighteenth century, the church, and the religious congregations of England, took the first step towards a provision for the education of the poor, by the creation of Sunday schools. These important institutions were the spontaneous growth of the zeal of religious communities for the diffusion of scriptural knowledge, and were the first advance towards the cardinal idea, that the school is an inseparable element for the organization of a christian congregation. Founded on a conception which has such vast relations, (though then imperfectly foreseen) and fostered by intense religious zeal, the Sunday school, especially in the north and west of England, and in the seats of manufacture and mining, has supplied a means for the religious instruction of the people, which may probably,

by the good providence of God, have contributed to save the country from some great convulsion. The influence of the Sunday school on public order and social progress, must be regarded from two points of view:—these institutions are most numerous and successful in the great towns which have been created on the coal fields of Great Britain, since the invention of the steam-engine. In such towns the labouring poor are employed during twelve or fourteen hours in the day, and the operations of the middle class are, during the week, incessant; until Sunday arrives, there are few or no opportunities for intercourse between the more wealthy and the working classes. The fact, that on the Sunday, many thousands of the middle class devote three hours of their rest from the business of life, to the pious object of instructing the children of the humbler ranks, shows how powerfully the cohesive influence of christian charity has been in operation between those elements of society among which repulsive forces abound. The indirect influence of the Sunday school has, therefore, been most favourable to social harmony and public order. Its direct influence is not less important. A large portion of the population chiefly owe the power to read, and whatever acquaintance they have with the Holy Scriptures, their connection with a religious congregation, and the influence of a religious example, to this school. It has also laid the foundation of public education for the poor deeply in the religious organization of the country. The type of this school has, to a great extent, pre-determined the constitution of the daily school, and provided

the fabric, which by a natural transition, may be employed in the establishment of an efficient system of elementary instruction; tending, in harmony with the Sunday schools, to complete the work of christian civilization which has been so auspiciously commenced.

So much apprehension was, however, felt, as to the effect of these Minutes on Sunday schools, that notice was given to the committee, previously to the Annual Meeting of 1847, that a resolution (of which a copy was forwarded) would be moved upon the subject. Upon submitting the resolution to Mr. Charles Hindley, M.P., the chairman, it appeared to be one which it was not necessary to oppose; because, although the committee were not prepared to admit that the danger to Sunday schools lamented over, existed in anything like the degree anticipated, yet the course of action recommended was one to which no objection could be raised. The resolution adopted was as follows:—

That, whilst the confidence which the constituents of this Union have always reposed in its officers, has been so well sustained by their active and well-directed efforts for stimulating and encouraging Sunday schools at home and abroad, this meeting would especially urge upon their vigilant attention, the adoption of such measures as shall not only secure the continuance of the Sabbath schools of our country and foreign lands, in their present state of prosperity; but shall also guard them, as far as possible, from the extinction with which they are perilled by the Minutes of Council in their progressive operation; and that the teachers and friends now present, cordially assure the committee, that, in their individual capacity,

they are fully resolved to yield them their most willing co-operation in acts worthy their character, as the friends of the civil and religious liberties of their country, and so essentially needed by the crisis at which we have arrived.

The committee who were appointed at the meeting at which this resolution was adopted, upon their assembling, took it into consideration; and while they felt that it would be out of their province to interfere with proceedings merely connected with general education; yet, if those proceedings were calculated to interrupt the successful workings of the Sunday school system, their duty called upon them to use their influence to prevent the evil. They, therefore, referred the subject to a sub-committee, who communicated with the gentlemen who moved and seconded the amendment, requesting them to point out in what way they thought the Minutes of Council would be injurious to Sunday schools, and were favoured in reply with very full statements of their views. The results of the investigation of the sub-committee were embodied in a memorial presented to the Committee of Council on Education, and which contained the following statements:—

That it is apprehended, that from the unwillingness of some parties to accept aid from the government, or the inability of places having a small population, to support more than one school, there will, in many cases, be no other means of public daily education, than that afforded by a school conducted by those who accept the assistance offered by the government. That the Sunday school system has so greatly increased, and its advan-

tages are so highly estimated, that it is probable such a school will be connected with every such day school. That, in many daily schools, it is the practice to require the scholars to learn the catechism and formularies of the church with which the schools are connected, and to attend the Sunday school and public worship on Sundays. That where, from the causes already stated, there is but one public daily school, to which the parents must, therefore, necessarily, send their children for instruction, it will be a great grievance to them if religious catechisms and formularies are taught, and the attendance of the children should be required on Sundays either at the Sunday school or at public worship, contrary to the inclinations of the parents. That the result of such a regulation will be to compel the parents, either to sacrifice the advantage of daily education for the children, or to withdraw them from attendance at the Sunday school and public worship which they approve. That the intentions of the government, in affording aid in the promotion of education, will thus be frustrated, or violence committed against the religious liberties of the people. That your memorialists, therefore, respectfully urge that a condition be annexed to all grants made under the authority of your lordships, that, in schools receiving such aid, the learning of religious catechisms and formularies, and attendance on Sundays at school or public worship, be not rendered compulsory on the scholars.

A deputation from the committee were also favoured with an interview with the Lord President of the Council, attended by Mr. Kay Shuttleworth, the Secretary,

now Sir J. P. K. Shuttleworth, Bart. ; when the statements of the memorial were urged upon the attention of his lordship, who was pleased to state, that his own feelings, and he believed those of every member of the Council, were in harmony with the object sought for by the committee of the Sunday School Union ; that every effort had been made, short of direct interference, to procure a rescinding of the rule of the National Society, by which the scholars were required to learn the church catechism, and to attend on Sundays ; that those efforts had been almost successful, but some circumstances occurred, which caused them to fail, and the rule still continued ; but that, in his lordship's own neighbourhood, and in other parts, it was not enforced where it was found objectionable ; that the Committee of Council having acted for some years with the National Society, on the understanding that its regulations should be maintained, did not feel themselves at liberty to require the rescinding of the rule, and that any such interference might cause it to be enforced still more rigidly ; but that, if in any place, it appeared that any parties were deprived of the means of education through the operation of such a regulation, the committee would be ready to give assistance beyond their usual limit, in order to enable a school to be established and carried on for the benefit of such parties ; being anxious to encourage the formation of schools to be conducted on liberal principles.

The deputation explained to his lordship, that the memorial was intended to apply to all bodies which might make the learning religious catechisms and



attendance on Sundays, a condition for receiving scholars into the daily school.

His lordship made several enquiries as to the constitution of the Sunday School Union, and the mode of conducting Sunday schools, which were answered; and in reply to an enquiry as to whether there would be any objection to his statements to the deputation being made public, his lordship said they were at full liberty to make his views known in any manner they might think desirable.

CHAPTER XVII.

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With the year 1848, commenced the publication of the Bible Class Magazine, a religious miscellany designed especially for senior scholars, and junior teachers, with the rising youth in christian congregations generally. The committee were induced to undertake this work from a conviction of the importance of providing a periodical adapted to these classes. While every religious community, and almost every class of every community, had its appropriate monthly magazine, for them no adequate periodical had been established. A few excellent works, which might appear suitable, had been sent forth, but the price of most, the denominational features of many, and the absence from all of the exact character required, still left the large body of senior scholars, and junior teachers, as a class, without a magazine. The committee determined that the periodical should not fall below any of its competitors, in its size or general arrangements, and it has attained a monthly circulation of 20,000, which, however, although large, is below that which might be expected from the large number of those for whom it is specially designed.

During this year the visits of the deputation from the committee were extended to Scotland. At Edinburgh,

Leith, and Glasgow, they were most cordially received, and large meetings were held. Much mutual benefit was derived from this fraternal intercourse.

The means by which the connexion between the Country Unions and the London Union could be rendered more distinct, occupied much of the attention of the committee. They had but a limited portion of time and effort which they could consecrate to their country friends, and the small funds at their disposal rendered it necessary to consider in what way they could employ that time, and those funds, so as best to serve the general cause. After much anxious enquiry, it appeared desirable that their assistance should be yielded in the United Kingdom, only through associated bodies in connexion with the Sunday School Union; not with a view of exercising any control over such bodies, or of assuming any responsibility for their acts, but simply that it might be seen that benefit resulted from teachers thus associating. The committee, therefore, adopted and communicated to the Country Unions, the following resolutions, which they thought would simplify the connexion between the schools in the Local Unions, and the London Union; while, at the same time, they secured all the advantages of union, to those who desire it.

That it be recommended to the committees of the Country Unions to follow the practice of the London Auxiliaries, in requiring a subscription from schools, applying to be admitted to such Unions.

That Country Unions, desiring a connexion with the London Sunday School Union, be required to subscribe

annually to its funds, and to forward copies of their reports, by the beginning of March, in each year.

That all grants to schools in Great Britain and Ireland, be made on the recommendation of the Auxiliaries, or Country Unions.

The committee were called, during this year, to lament the loss of Mr. Edward Thomas, who had been a member of their body for more than thirty-six years. He was born on the 23rd of May, 1778, at Wem Weston, near Oswestry. He was early the subject of vicissitude, having been deprived, by death, of a father's care, at the age of four years. At the usual period, he was apprenticed to learn the business of a tailor; but the decease of his master, during the term of his apprenticeship, caused him to leave his native village, to seek employment at Manchester, before he had attained his twentieth year. He often referred to this period, in terms shewing the warmth of his attachment to his widowed mother,—how he turned, again and again, ere he could leave, to look at the cottage in which she dwelt, till he was compelled to sit down and give vent to his emotion in a flood of tears; and in his intercourse with the young, to the end of his days, few subjects were so prominent in his discourse, as the duty of love to parents. At Manchester he was exposed to much temptation from ungodly fellow-workmen; but happily he had a pious master, who induced him to attend the ministry of Dr. Bailey, at St. James's Church. Under the preaching of that excellent man, his mind was impressed with the importance of eternal things, and he became the subject of that mighty change which is emphatically described in

Scripture, as being "born again." From that period he became a frequent attendant at the social prayer meetings, and was soon encouraged to assist in conducting their exercises.

About the year 1804, Mr. Thomas left Manchester for the metropolis, and was recommended by Dr. Bailey to attend the ministry of the Rev. Samuel Crowther, of Christ Church, Newgate Street. He was soon found at the social prayer meetings, then held in connection with that congregation, and was invited to join a society for the visitation of the sick poor. In the year 1807, Mr. Thomas became a teacher in the Silver Street Sunday schools; and subsequently joined the congregation worshipping at Silver Street Chapel, of which the Rev. E. J. Jones was then minister. For eleven years he laboured assiduously in a class of boys; and during that period, often mourned over the waywardness of his scholars, and his apparent want of success; but in after years, his journal records, with grateful feeling, that many of these youths had given the most satisfactory evidence of piety—had become Sunday school teachers; members of various christian societies; honoured and esteemed in their position in life, and useful in the church, and in the world. From the time of his becoming a teacher, he took a lively interest in all the meetings, whether for business or devotion, held in connexion with the school, and nothing less than imperative engagements ever prevented his being present. In the year 1818, Mr. J. D. Pearson, the superintendent of the girls' school, at Silver Street, was appointed to the care of the schools at Chinsurah,

then under the patronage of the Marquis of Hastings, Governor General of India. Mr. Thomas was selected to fill the vacant post, and commenced his work with many prayers. It was his custom to enter in a journal from week to week, notices of any thing which he deemed worthy of remark in the proceedings of the school, and of his visits to sick children at their homes;—this journal he continued with occasional interruptions from temporary loss of sight, from cataract, until nearly the close of life. His anxieties for the scholars did not cease on their leaving the school. At his suggestion, an annual meeting on Easter Monday of former scholars was commenced in the year 1827, and there, with intense interest on each returning year, he poured forth his prayers, his counsels, his congratulations, his hopes, and his fears. At the meeting in 1848, when upwards of 300 attended, his infirmities prevented his personally taking a part in the proceedings, but he could not refrain from making known to them in writing, the deep interest he felt in their welfare. Mr. Thomas was eminently catholic in his religious sentiments. The principles of the Union were precisely those which ever met his cordial sympathies. It has been already mentioned, that he was one of a sub-committee to whom in April 1812, the prospectus of the proposed Teacher's Magazine was submitted for examination. His parlour was not unfrequently the committee room of the Union in its infancy, and there the first public meeting held in the year 1812 was determined on. He had been laid aside during the early part of this, the closing year of his existence on earth, and while viewing death as appa-

rently near at hand, although he had no rapture, encountered no gloom or despondency. His hopes were firm ; he knew in whom he had believed, and expressed himself quite willing to go or remain, as best pleased his heavenly Father. He was sufficiently recovered in the months of June and July to revisit the school in which he loved to be found ; and on Sunday the 23rd of July conducted the closing exercise, addressing the scholars with more than his usual earnestness, vigour, and effect ; but on the following Tuesday on attack of sporadic cholera came on, which, acting on a frame reduced and weakened by the previous winter's confinement, closed his earthly career on the morning of the 29th of July, when, without a struggle, his spirit returned to God who gave it.\*

Shortly after the Annual Meeting of this year, the committee were led to institute an enquiry into the present state of the schools in the metropolis, with respect, in the first place, to the numbers of scholars belonging to them, and next, as to the efficiency of the instruction imparted in them. This enquiry was commenced by a conference with the committees of the four London Auxiliaries, held in the school-room in Jewin Street, on July 12th, and adjourned to July 26th, when a resolution was adopted, recommending the Auxiliaries to take the subject into consideration, with a view to submit the results to a future meeting. In pursuance of this recommendation, many meetings were held ; ministers

\* These particulars are taken from a biographical sketch written by a friend of Mr. Thomas, and inserted in the *Union Magazine* for 1848, p. 273.

and teachers assembled, and looked carefully at the Institutions in which they feel so deep an interest, and on which so much labour has been bestowed ; and their impression was, that while the fullest confidence might be placed in the system, as calculated, under the Divine blessing, to effect the objects it is designed to attain, yet that it was not carried out to that extent, nor with that efficiency, which is necessary to its complete success. The adjourned conference was held at the same place on December 19th, when a resolution was adopted, requesting the committee to convene a meeting of the members of the Union at Exeter Hall, to receive a report of the state of the schools, and to adopt such measures thereon as should be thought expedient. That meeting was held on February 13, 1849, when Mr. Lloyd was enabled, after a long absence from the public meetings of the Union, to attend and preside over the deliberations of the large assembly. A statement prepared by the committee, of the circumstances under which the meeting was convened, was read. It was also inserted at length in several publications in connexion with a report of the proceedings, and it is therefore unnecessary to do more than state, that the committee felt themselves compelled to come to the conclusion, that within the limits embraced by the Union, there were at that time more than 100,000 young persons suitable objects for Sunday schools, who were not found within their walls.

The following are the resolutions which were adopted at the meeting :—

First. That it appears the scholars in attendance at



Sunday schools within five miles from the General Post Office, are not at all commensurate with the necessities of the population, while at the same time many of these schools could receive, without inconvenience, a much larger number; that in order to remedy this evil, it is desirable to secure the co-operation of the societies engaged in domiciliary visitation; to institute an immediate canvass in the neighbourhood of each school, and by increased attention to the physical, moral, and religious welfare of the scholars, to connect with the school their most endearing associations.

Second. That the gradual, but decisive and important change which has taken place in Sunday schools, arising from the extension of general education, and by which they are daily acquiring a more religious character, makes it increasingly important that their connexion with the church should be more close than it has in general hitherto been; that while this meeting would not desire to add to the labours of their respected and beloved pastors the active duties of Sunday school teachers, they would earnestly solicit their sympathy, guidance, and influence, that thereby the church may be brought to consider the school as an important part of its agency in carrying forward the evangelization of the world.

Third. That this meeting desires to record its deep conviction that, under the divine blessing, the prosperity of Sunday schools mainly depends on the efficiency of that living agency by which they are conducted, that the teachers now present, while acknowledging, with humility, their inadequate estimate of the importance

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of their office, and their insufficient self-preparation for the right discharge of its duties, rejoice in the efforts which have been recently made to awaken them to a sense of their responsibility, and in the means which have been provided for their improvement, and would devoutly and earnestly pray that they may ever be found acting under the influence of proper motives, and shrinking from no exertion which is necessary to qualify them for the important station they occupy, as the religious instructors of the young.

Fourth. That it be referred to the committee to adopt such measures as may appear to them desirable for carrying out the above resolutions.

In pursuance of the last of the above resolutions, the committee requested the committees of the four London Auxiliaries, to bring the subject before the teachers of each individual school in personal conference, and also printed a letter, addressed to the teachers, urging the various points, contained in those resolutions, upon their consideration.

The sympathy of the committee was excited on behalf of the widow of Mr. J. R. Wilson, whose long connexion with the Union has been already mentioned, and who died at Newcastle, from cholera, on the 5th of October, 1849. He had devoted his life to the welfare of his fellow-men, very much to the neglect of his own personal interest, and left Mrs. Wilson, and his children in straitened circumstances. It afforded the committee much pleasure to contribute towards them the assistance their circumstances required.

Two prizes, of £10, and £5, having been offered for

Essays on Senior Classes, the first prize was awarded to Mr. J. A. Cooper, Secretary to the Birmingham Union, and the second to Miss Barrow. Mr. Cooper's Essay has since been published by the Union.

The resistance which was offered to the alterations proposed in the year 1838, in the mode of conducting the business of the General Post Office, increasing at once the amount of Sunday labour, and leading on to a more extensive desecration of the day of rest, had succeeded in averting the evil for a time. The design however, was not abandoned, and on Friday morning, September 28, the public journals contained an official announcement, that on and after the 14th October, letters posted in provincial post offices, on the blank post day, (or Saturday) for towns beyond London, should, if stamped, and paying full letter rates, be forwarded so as to be delivered, except in remote places, on the Monday morning. This was accompanied by orders issued within the walls of the Post Office, rendered necessary by this regulation, and which created no small anxiety and alarm among the officials of the Inland department, and especially those who loved the day and house of God. One of these orders was as follows, "On and after the 14th of next month, you will be required to attend twice on that day, the same as on the other days of the week." The committee presented a memorial to the Lords Commissioners of her Majesty's Treasury, praying that the cessation of business which had hitherto existed in the London Post Office, on the Lord's day, might continue to be observed. They also convened a meeting, at Exeter Hall, on

Monday, October 8, at which Mr. Alderman Challis presided, and on his being compelled to leave, Sir John Heron Maxwell, Bart., afterwards occupied the chair. Resolutions were adopted deprecating the proposed measures. The ground taken was, that such a proceeding would be a violation of the divine law—would deprive many persons of their only day of religion or rest; would withdraw many others from works of mercy, for purposes of secular employment and commercial convenience; and that such alterations would prove, (it was to be feared,) only a first step to the opening of the Post Office for general purposes, as on any other day. It being afterwards urged that the relief sought only applied to the metropolis, the committee presented a further memorial, praying for the total cessation of Sunday postal labour throughout the country, and they recommended to teachers generally, the adoption of a similar memorial. It afforded the committee much pleasure to find that a growing conviction that Sunday postal labour could be abolished through the country, led the House of Commons to adopt an address to her majesty to that effect, which request was complied with. No adequate arrangements were, however, made to obviate the inconveniences which must have been expected to accompany so extensive an alteration; every complaint against the closing of the country post offices, was welcomed, and her majesty's ministers made no secret of their disinclination to the measure. The natural result was, that the Sunday postal labour was resumed, and is still continued, although with some material alleviations. The

committee, in reporting this to the ensuing annual meeting, expressed their deep conviction, that the continuance of such labour cannot be justified: that the freedom from the delivery and collection of letters, which London has so long enjoyed, has been a great blessing; that if such a freedom is not found to produce any real inconvenience in the metropolis, all such as was temporarily felt in the country, would have speedily disappeared, and that the transmission of country letters, through London, on the Lord's day will, if not most carefully watched, lead on to the delivery and collection of letters in the metropolis. While, however, it is to be regretted that the efforts made have been but partially successful, to a great extent, the remedy is in the hands of christian men; let those in London refrain from posting letters by the Saturday night mails, let those in the country decline receiving letters on Sunday mornings, or posting them on Sunday evenings, and that result will be obtained by moral influence, which legislative interference has failed to procure.

With the year 1850, the committee commenced an undertaking which has already proved very beneficial to the members of the Union, and will be increasingly so; whenever they are enabled, by the acquisition of larger premises, to carry out their designs to the full extent. The opening of a reading room, and library of reference, for the use of teachers, and the adding to it a library of circulation, have already been mentioned, as well as the lectures which were delivered for the benefit of the subscribers. Although the subscription was only 5s.

per annum, yet the use made of the advantages offered did not meet the desires of the committee. The number of the subscribers did not exceed 130, and the committee thought that a part of their funds might be beneficially employed in enlarging the circulating library, and throwing it open, with the reading room and the use of the reference library, to all teachers male and female, who are members of the Union, at a nominal subscription of 1s. per annum and to other teachers at a subscription of 5s. per annum. The circulating library was increased to 1,611 volumes; the reading room was kept open from three in the afternoon, until ten in the evening, and 1,089 teachers became subscribers. The committee have had no reason to regret their having offered to female teachers the opportunity of studying the biblical works contained in the reference library, as well as of perusing the periodical works which lie on the tables of the reading room. The library has been since increased to about 3,000 volumes, and the average number of subscribers is about 700, most of whom shew, by their constant use of the advantages offered, how highly they estimate the privileges they thus enjoy.

CHAPTER XVIII.

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THE year 1851 will be long memorable for that Exhibition of the Industry of all Nations in Hyde Park, which drew together such a large assemblage from all parts of the world. In order to promote the comfort of those teachers who might be induced to visit London, the reading-room at the Depository was opened to them without charge during the months of May, June, July, and August. It was thought probable that many country teachers might desire to see some of the metropolitan schools, and a list was therefore prepared and kept at the Depository, to enable them to select schools contiguous to their residence.

The visits of the committee to the country Unions were not so numerous as in former years, owing to these circumstances. They thought it might be useful, however, to make provision for a series of weekly conferences in London, accessible to country teachers. Four such meetings were accordingly held in the theatre of the City of London Literary Institution, in the month of June, when the following subjects were considered:—

The present state of religious instruction in Sunday schools: the means of extending such schools, and of increasing their efficiency.

The preparation, admission, and instruction of teachers.

The respective duties of the superintendent, secretary, and librarian, in a Sunday school.

The admission of scholars ; their division by sexes ; the mode of appointing them to classes ; the number and character of the classes ; and the removal of scholars from class to class.

It was the intention of the committee to follow these up with other practical subjects, but although they had the pleasure of meeting many esteemed fellow-labourers from the country, yet the attendance was not large enough to justify the expense and labour attending the conferences, and they were therefore discontinued.

The committee had to lament the loss of one of their members, Mr. John Holiday, by sudden death, on Saturday, August 30th. On that morning he left home in his usual health ; in the course of the day, he had occasion to visit Pinner on business ; in the evening he returned to the station, and was waiting the arrival of the train. After sitting a few minutes, he was observed suddenly to fall on his face on the platform, and before he could be lifted up, and without uttering a word, life was extinct. This painful event was reported at the committee meeting, held September 19th, 1851, when the following resolutions were adopted :

That this committee having heard with much concern of the decease of their late esteemed fellow-labourer, Mr. John Holiday, desire to bear testimony to the consistency of his christian profession, and the zeal and ability with which he discharged the duties devolving



upon him as one of the representatives of the West London Auxiliary Sunday School Union, during a period of nine years.

That, while deeply sympathizing with his bereaved widow and family, in the suddenness and severity of their affliction, this committee are consoled by the assurance that their departed friend's faith was fixed upon the Rock of Ages, and that he is now in the presence of that Saviour, whose work among the young he so fondly loved.

In the month of October her majesty visited Manchester, on which occasion a meeting of Sunday scholars took place, in Peel Park, Salford, which deserves to be recorded. The original idea of this gathering occurred first to a few members of the Manchester Union; and about the same time, the Mayor of Salford (Thomas Agnew, Esq.) had suggested a meeting of this kind. Eventually, Mr. Robert Needham, one of the secretaries of the Union, was sent to confer with the mayor, at whose invitation a meeting of the clergy, ministers, and conductors of Sunday schools in Manchester and Salford, was held in the Town Hall, Salford, on Friday, August 29th, to take into consideration the propriety of assembling the scholars in Peel Park, on the occasion of her majesty's visit on the 10th of October. The meeting was numerously attended, and the suggestion of the Mayor of Salford was cheerfully adopted. Mr. Robert Needham undertook the office of secretary, and devoted all his energy to carrying out the plan. A large subscription was raised for the purpose of erecting an inclined platform to accommodate the whole of the scholars likely to assemble: it was decided to issue a

medal commemorative of her majesty's visit, and of the assemblage of Sunday scholars; the verses 1 and 3 of the National Anthem were adopted as suitable to be sung on the occasion; and instead of the second verse commencing, "O Lord, our God, arise, Scatter her enemies," one composed by Mr. Charles Swain was substituted.

An arrangement of the music by Mr. J. Novello was adopted, and 7000 copies of the music and words were supplied for sale in the schools, who met in the Free Trade Hall, and other places, which were kindly lent gratuitously, to afford an opportunity for the scholars rehearsing the anthem.

The following description of the scene which the park presented on the morning of the 10th October, is given by one of the secretaries to the Union, two of whom were present on the occasion.

We were on the ground at daybreak. The enormous platforms in Peel Park, one large and two smaller ones, were as yet unfinished. For a moment we could hardly understand how they could have cost a thousand pounds; but, when examined in detail, the wonder ceased. The principal platform extended across the park, describing a slight concave. Two smaller ones, having the same lineal extent, but of less depth, were ranged parallel with the front of the large one, the carriage drive being between them. The quantity of wood supplied was 9,000 cubic feet of American timber, and 130,000 square feet of 3-inch planking. The principal platform was 200 yards long, and 27 yards wide, rising 4 yards and 6 inches. Its area was 5,400 superficial yards, and formed an amphitheatre which was struck from a

radius of 466 yards. The top and sides of the platform were railed round with substantial railing 3 feet high, enclosed with three-quarter-inch boarding, 18 inches high. The two minor platforms, which ran the whole length, were constructed on the same principle, 13 yards wide, and rising only 3 feet 6 inches high, being separated in the centre by an opening 12 yards wide. The carriage drive was in the centre of the platforms, 8 yards wide, made level and sodded. There was also a space in the centre, between the foot of the platform and the carriage drive, of 9 yards, which gradually diminished to 6 yards at each end. The three platforms were calculated to accommodate 62,000 children, and the level space (also covered with planking on bearers) 20,000; making together a total accommodation for 82,000 persons.

The first school took up its position a quarter before seven o'clock, and was followed in rapid succession by thousands of scholars and teachers, walking eight abreast, with their distinctive standards, preceded in most instances by the clergymen and ministers of their respective congregations. By eight o'clock the large platform was nearly filled, and by nine all three were entirely occupied by scholars.

A sudden break in the heavy clouds, and a gleam of sunshine, threw an air of cheerfulness over all, that smoothed many an anxious brow, and lightened thousands of hearts. The spectacle, from this time until its termination, was of the most interesting and sublime character; and there was a moral grandeur in the scene, suggestive of great religious, social, and political results.

At twenty minutes to ten o'clock, Mr. D. W. Banks, the musical conductor, who had been for weeks indefatigable in his labours, gave the signal from his central stand for a rehearsal. Never shall we forget the thrill of delight which that beautiful melody, the National Anthem, produced within us, as it "rolled," (we can find no other term,) in admirable time and tone from 80,000, mostly youthful, voices. "The effect of this performance," says a Manchester paper, "was most imposing." "Such a scene, and such a song," said a Sunday school veteran of fifty years' standing, "was worth going to America for."

At a quarter past eleven o'clock, the Queen, Prince Albert, and their two elder children, arrived; being preceded by the Mayor of Salford and the High Sheriff of the county, and followed by the Dukes of Wellington and Norfolk: Earls Grey, Carlisle, and Ellesmere, the Marquis of Westminster, and several ladies in attendance. Her majesty passed round the park to the pavilion, where addresses were presented by the corporation of Salford, and then entered the carriage drive between the platforms; immediately, as with one voice, broke forth the first line, "God save our gracious queen," the whole verse being effectively and touchingly sung. We give what followed in the words of the words of the Manchester Examiner:—

The carriages passed on from the pavilion to the drive between the platforms, where the schools were collected; and, as a hundred thousand voices raised the National Anthem in harmonious union of heart and tone, the spectacle exhibited to the distinguished party

was grand beyond imagination ; in the centre of this enormous amphitheatre, densely filled with eager human faces, surmounted by many banners waving around its circumference, the queen halted a moment to survey an assemblage of a character unprecedented, it may be, in the history of her kingdoms.

But the enthusiasm of her young subjects could no longer be restrained ; a great portion of the children burst forth from the metrical and musical measures in which their voices were to find utterance, and cheered with all the breath in their little bosoms. The queen, laughing with pleasant appreciation of their so immoderate loyalty, bowed over and over again, to their intense delight, and passed on. The first verse only was sung in her presence ; the second verse, which was taken up after her retreat, though only partially, was composed by Mr. Charles Swain, as follows :—

Crown'd by a nation's love,  
Guarded by heaven above,  
Long live the queen !  
Long may each voice exclaim,  
Wide as Britannia's fame,  
Long live Victoria's name,  
God bless the queen !

The scene made a lively impression on all present. Copies, in gold, of the medals issued on the occasion were presented by the Mayor of Salford to the Queen, on behalf of the Prince of Wales and Princess Royal, with an address, and which were graciously received. On her return to London, her majesty desired that the particulars of the schools presented on the occasion

might be furnished to her. They were in number 222, and comprised twenty-one denominations.

It is painful to record, that Mr. Needham spent his last days in this service; the labour proved too much for him. Immediately afterwards he went to the sea-side, and appeared to have recovered strength; but shortly after his return fever came on, and on December 20th he entered into rest, at the early age of thirty-three years.

The usual application was made to the Right Honourable the Earl Roden, the President of the Union, to occupy the chair at the Annual Meeting in 1852; in answer to which, his lordship stated, as he had uniformly done, that his engagements in Ireland rendered it impossible for him to undertake to preside. He also intimated, that, if the committee could find any other gentleman suitable for filling the office, he should have much pleasure in making way for a successor. The committee were induced, under these circumstances, to apply to their highly esteemed treasurer, W. B. Gurney, Esq., to solicit him to become its president, with which request he complied, and was appointed at the Annual Meeting, at which time Mr. Alderman Challis, Alderman of London, was elected treasurer, in the place of Mr. Gurney.

At the conference held on the morning of this anniversary, a suggestion was made, and appeared to receive general support, that a cheap periodical was needed for the younger scholars. The committee, immediately after their appointment, took this matter into consideration, and thought that such a work might be

useful. They, therefore, determined to commence it at once, and the first number of the "Child's Own Magazine," price one halfpenny, appeared in July. The anticipations formed, as to the necessity for such a periodical, have been fully realized. It has already obtained a circulation of nearly 10,000 copies monthly, and which will be largely increased as the work becomes better known.

During this year, the committee were called upon to resist an attempt to increase the temptations, already too numerous, to employ the Lord's day for purposes of amusement. For many years past, desires have been expressed, that the British Museum and National Gallery might be opened on the Sabbath. The removal to Sydenham of the building erected in Hyde Park, for the exhibition of the industry of all nations, and its re-construction on an enlarged plan, brought this subject again before the public. The Directors of the Company applied to the government, presided over by Lord Derby, for a charter, sanctioning, among other things, the opening of this new building on the Lord's day. This permission the government agreed to grant on certain terms. It appeared to the committee, that the course thus adopted was objectionable. The government were not merely abstaining from interfering to preserve the sanctity of the Lord's day, with all its blessings, but they were actually sanctioning a measure which would, in all probability, lead to a more extensive desecration of the day than had ever before occurred. This was proposed to be done, with all the pleasing recollections attending that public acknowledgment of

our duty in this respect, which was testified in the face of the whole world, by a closing of the Great Exhibition on that day. And it was done in full view of the example which would thus be set with respect to other public establishments, the closing of which on the Lord's day it would be difficult afterwards to justify on any intelligible principle. The committee, therefore, resolved to present a memorial to the government, stating their objections to the course about to be adopted. Before the memorial was presented, however, it was discovered that there was a law in existence rendering unlawful the taking money for admission to places of public resort, on the Lord's day, and a clause was inserted in the charter granted, prohibiting the opening of the building on that day, until the sanction of the legislature was obtained. An effort was then made to obtain public support to a movement, having in view, the removal of this restriction, and although the parties stimulating the effort did not appear, it was evident that neither money nor exertion would be wanting to render it successful. The committee did not feel at liberty to remain inactive, while the minds of the working classes were thus sought to be imbued with the sentiment, that those were their best friends who desired to throw down the safeguards at present existing around the Lord's day, and to convert it from a day of sacred rest into one of worldly enjoyment, and ultimately of worldly care and labour. They, therefore, prepared a form of petition to both Houses of Parliament, which they largely circulated, with instructions as to the mode of procuring and forwarding petitions



from teachers, parents, and friends, and those who had been scholars in each district, and for obtaining the support of the Members of Parliament representing such respective districts. In order that the signatures to those petitions might be affixed intelligently, the committee recommended that meetings of the parents and friends of Sunday scholars should be held, and the subject, with all its bearings upon their temporal as well as spiritual interests, laid fully before them. At the request of the committee, the Rev. Dr. Campbell wrote an address to teachers, which was inserted in the Union Magazine, and afterwards printed separately for distribution. A similar address to senior scholars was written by the Rev. C. H. Bateman, and inserted in the Bible Class Magazine. This address has also been reprinted as a tract. These and other efforts succeeded in averting the evil for the present, and there is reason to believe that the Directors of the Crystal Palace Company now think their own pecuniary interest will be best promoted, by keeping the building and its grounds closed on the Lord's day.

The committee received with much pleasure intelligence of the formation of a Sunday School Society at Paris, formed on the model of the Union, and having similar objects in view. A Sunday school magazine had been published there during the year 1851, which excited attention to the subject, and the result has been the formation of this society, which is being carried on with energy, and will, it is trusted, prove a great blessing to the French nation.

On the 13th of July, 1852, commenced the fiftieth

year of the existence of the Union. The committee, in their report to the general meeting, over which Alfred Rooker, Esq., Mayor of Plymouth, presided, stated generally the mode in which they proposed to celebrate the Jubilee Year, and which received the approbation of that assembly. With a view to carry out the resolution then adopted, a meeting of the committee was held at the Depository, on the 13th of July, for the purpose of offering thanksgiving to Almighty God, for the success which had attended the labours of the society during the long and eventful period of forty-nine years, and to implore a blessing upon the efforts about to be made for the celebration of its year of Jubilee. In the evening of the same day, a meeting of the ministers, superintendents, secretaries, and representatives of schools connected with the Union, assembled in Surrey Chapel school-room, the site where, forty-nine years previously, the Union was formed. Mr. Gurney, the founder of the Union, took the chair. There were also present, Mr. James Nisbet, and Mr. Thomas Thompson, the only other survivors of those who took part in the proceedings of that day. It was a gratifying circumstance, and one which correctly marks the catholic character of the Institution, that these three survivors of the little band, who, animated with love to the Saviour, to the souls of the young, met together on the 13th July, 1803, and formed the Sunday School Union, should represent respectively three important sections of the Christian Church. A sketch of the history of the Union, with the plan suggested by the committee for commemorating its Jubilee, was laid before the meeting, and the following resolutions unanimously adopted.

1. That in reviewing the progress of the Sunday School Union, this meeting feels called upon thankfully to acknowledge the divine providence which has watched over the Institution, and made it the means of so greatly extending and improving the Sunday school system, while the disinterestedness, and absence of denominational partialities, which have characterised its proceedings, entitle it to the warmest sympathy and support of evangelical christians of all denominations.

2. That this meeting considers the fiftieth anniversary of the society should be celebrated by some suitable memorial,—a memorial that should be in itself instrumental in increasing the usefulness of the Union; and that it is, therefore, desirable to erect a building for the following purposes, viz :—

1st. To provide accommodation for the libraries of circulation and reference, which are now made use of by upwards of 600 teachers, at a nominal subscription of 1s. per annum.

2nd. To accommodate the classes which meet weekly to prepare the lessons to be taught on the following Lord's day.

3rd. To enable the teachers of London to meet for occasional conference, or to receive instruction by means of lectures.

4th. To secure enlarged space for the increasing business of the Union.

3. That a subscription be forthwith opened for the purpose of carrying out the above object, and that it is hereby respectfully and earnestly recommended to all ministers, churches, and congregations, and especially to

the Auxiliaries and the country Unions, and the teachers and friends of Sunday schools, throughout the country, to aid the same by quarterly collections, in the schools, on the last Lord's day in the months of August, November, February, and May next, and by every other means in their power.

The resolutions submitted to the meeting were proposed by the Revds. J. Campbell, D.D., W. Leask, J. Sherman, W. Walters, and Messrs. Althans, Groser, Jackson, Nisbet, and Reed.

It will be the work of some future historian to detail the proceedings consequent on these important resolutions, which open a prospect of increased labour and usefulness for those upon whom the duty of conducting the affairs of the Union shall henceforth devolve.

CHAPTER XIX.

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THE object of the preceding narrative has been to trace the gradual progress of the Sunday School Union, and to point out the means by which it has sought to carry out the extension and improvement of the Sunday school system. This concluding chapter will be devoted to an attempt to bring before the mind of the reader, in a more condensed form, the facts which have been related. The question has often been asked by those who have not given much attention to the operations of the Society, "What has the Union done?" Having received an impression that all which is necessary to carry out the Sunday school system is to open a school room, and to set some young persons to instruct the children seeking for admission, and perceiving that the Union does not undertake this work, such enquirers conclude that its labours are unnecessary. For their benefit, therefore, it may be desirable to answer briefly the question "What has the Union done?"

*It has greatly aided in the extension of Sunday schools.* The number of Sunday scholars within a circuit of a few miles round London was estimated, shortly after the formation of the Union, to be 21,000. At the time of taking the census of 1851, this amount had swelled to 138,600. A large portion of this increase may be fairly considered to have arisen from the operations of

the Union; from the attention of christian churches being thus drawn to the subject; from the necessities of various neighbourhoods having been made known; and from the interest excited in the minds of pious youths, as well as from the direct assistance rendered by the Union. But it has already been mentioned that the formation of this Institution was followed by the establishment of similar Unions in various parts of the country—they are not confined to England, but are found in Scotland, Wales, and Ireland. The larger part of them are founded on the catholic principle of admitting all evangelical schools to partake in their advantages, while others are more restrictive, but they are all extending and improving the Sunday school system. Nor has the influence of the Association formed in 1803 been limited to the British isles. On the continent of Europe, in Asia, in southern Africa, in Australia, in America, the same plans have been adopted, and in some instances with great success.

But in order that schools may be efficiently carried on, it is important that there should be convenient places in which they may assemble. In the early part of the Union's existence there was little provision of this sort made, and the schools were conducted under very unfavourable circumstances. During the few past years, however, *the Union has aided in the erection of new school rooms*, by granting £7,000 in aid of that object in various parts of the country.

*It has opened the schools to infants, and has delivered the younger scholars from the drudgery formerly attendant upon the A B C and elementary classes.* Many teachers

remember the alphabet on boards, and the various devices which were adopted in order to bring the younger scholars acquainted with the art of reading. All this is now swept away by the use of the letter box in infant classes, by which means the scholars can be admitted into the schools at a much earlier age than heretofore, and receive instruction in a form which economizes the labour of teachers, interests the scholars, enables them to use the scriptural lesson of the day, and which so rapidly advances them in the mechanical art of reading that further elementary instruction becomes unnecessary, and the scholars are transferred from the infant to the scripture class.

*The Sunday School Union has aided in procuring a cheap Bible for Sunday scholars.* It has always felt the greatest anxiety that each scholar should be the possessor of a portable copy of the Divine Word. Hence arose the repeated applications to the committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society, which resulted in the gradual lowering of the prices to Sunday scholars, until at length the monopoly was practically destroyed, and every one may possess a copy of the Scriptures at the lowest price for which it can be prepared.

*The Union has established the principle of an uniform Scripture Lesson in Sunday Schools.* No longer are the teachers found selecting the lesson without consideration, but the Scripture is read consecutively, and studied as a whole. The teachers have that assistance rendered them in their preparatory studies which fits them to take the head of their classes without anxiety, and the whole

work of the school has a definite character. The 17,000 copies of the Notes on Scripture Lessons issued monthly by the Union forms but a small part of the benefit derived; to ascertain its full extent, reference must be made to the numerous similar publications issued by other bodies, founded upon the principle introduced by the Union.

*The scholars are largely indebted to the Union for their Lending Libraries*—those important appendages to Sunday schools. It is no slight advantage that teachers can find at the Depository of the Union 800 volumes adapted for the perusal of the young, which are certified not to contain anything prejudicial to their minds. It is an encouragement to authors to prepare, and to publishers to issue suitable publications, that such an opening for their sale should be afforded. But the benefit has not stopped here. In order to encourage teachers to establish and maintain in efficiency libraries for their scholars, the committee have for several years past made grants of books for this purpose, at about one-third of the publication price. The number of libraries thus granted up to the 31st of March, 1853, is 2750, the value of which, at the publication price, was £16,762, but for which the schools only paid the sum of £5,587.

*Juvenile Periodical Literature originated with the Sunday School Union.* From the members of its committee proceeded *The Youth's Magazine*, which introduced the writings of so many valuable authors to the notice of the public, and which has been the cherished companion and guide of the younger members of the



christian families of this land. In the committee of the Union was the idea of a Penny Magazine for Children first started; by a teacher connected with the Union was the first such magazine issued, without a thought that it would prove the precursor of a department of literature expanding to so enormous an extent, and, with all its attendant evils, conferring an immense amount of benefit. By the Union are the senior scholars and junior teachers in Sunday schools supplied monthly with The Bible Class Magazine, adapted especially to their age and circumstances; and The Child's Own Magazine proves that even the younger scholars are not forgotten.

While the Sunday School Union has thus cared for the scholars, it has not been unmindful of the teachers. Ever feeling, that upon their efficiency depends, under the Divine blessing, the hoped-for success, the committee have sought, as far as in them lay, to aid their fellow-labourers in preparing for their work, as well as in discharging all the duties connected with it.

*They have provided a Library of Reference and Circulation, comprising about 3000 volumes, to which the members of the Union have free access at a nominal subscription of one shilling per annum, and the advantages of which will be increased and extended when enlarged premises shall render it practicable.*

*The Publications of the Union designed for the instruction of Teachers are numerous and varied.* These have not been prepared by mere theorists, but by those who have tested by actual experiment, every plan they recommend. It may, without impropriety, be said,

that in these works teachers find the matured judgment of those who have devoted their energies for many years to the religious instruction of the young. How much have teachers been indebted to the *Teacher's Magazine*, which, although not belonging to the Union, was commenced and carried on by members of the committee? It has been followed by the *Union Magazine*, aiding, likewise, in the instruction and assistance of teachers—whilst the “*Directions for the Establishment and Management of Sunday Schools*,” “*Sunday School Class Register, Almanac and Diary*,” “*Notes on the Scripture Lessons*,” and the various prize essays written at the invitation of the committee, and published by them, all attest their unceasing activity in meeting the wants of their fellow-labourers.

*The Committee have added to these efforts for the benefit of Teachers, the advantages of personal intercourse.* They have established at the Depository, a weekly class for the preparation of the lesson for the ensuing Lord's day, presided over by one of their number, and open to the visits of teachers whether in London or from the country, and which has formed a model for many similar classes. The committee have sought intercourse with teachers in the country, and deputations have visited England, Wales, Scotland, and<sup>d</sup> Ireland, for this purpose, at the expense of the society. Conference has thus been held with thousands of teachers, who have uniformly expressed their gratification at this fraternal intercourse.

The Sunday School Union is sometimes spoken of as if it were a local Institution. The preceding review

will shew that its benevolent efforts embrace every spot where there is a young immortal needing instruction in the way of salvation. There is no doubt, that, at its origin, nothing more was contemplated than the benefit of the Sunday schools of the metropolis; but the providence of God soon opened for it a more enlarged sphere of usefulness, and since the formation of the four London Auxiliaries, the many local efforts of the Union have devolved upon them, and the general committee have devoted their attention to the extension and improvement of Sunday schools throughout the world. Very much of their time has been occupied in the preparation of works designed to assist in the establishment and conduct of these Institutions; and these works are, perhaps, more valuable to the schools situated in the distant parts of this land, or in foreign countries, than to those in London itself. The granting pecuniary assistance was not contemplated by the founders of the Union, nor was it until the celebration of the Jubilee of Sunday schools in 1831, that this part of the society's operations became of importance. The contributions from the public to the funds of the Union have never been of any great amount, and have not amounted on the average to £400 a year, while the publications of the Union are sold at a low price, and, in some cases, do not even meet their expenses. There is, however, one branch of the business which yields a profit—the sale of publications approved by the committee, and for which a commission is received. As the services of the committee and officers of the Union are gratuitous, a surplus is thus obtained, the disposal of which will shew yet more dis-

tinctly, how far removed the benefits of the Union are from being of a merely local character.

The following are the particulars of grants made out of the funds of the Union from the year 1831 to 1853:—

|                                                          | £       | s. | d. |
|----------------------------------------------------------|---------|----|----|
| Cash Grants . . . . .                                    | 1,231   | 12 | 7  |
| Expenses of the Sunday school Mission .                  | 2,233   | 17 | 3  |
| Expenses of deputations . . . . .                        | 1,263   | 9  | 0  |
| Grants in aid of building school-rooms .                 | 6,989   | 0  | 0  |
| Grants of books, at the publication price.               | 5,810   | 16 | 1  |
| „ Libraries „ 16,762                                     | 7       | 8  |    |
| „ Deduct paid by schools 5,587                           | 0       | 0  |    |
|                                                          | 11,175  | 7  | 8  |
| Total amount of expenditure for }<br>benevolent purposes | £28,704 | 2  | 7  |

Where has this large sum been expended? Have the Sunday schools of the metropolis alone received the benefit? This question can be answered with sufficient exactness for all practical purposes. On analyzing the various items of which the total is composed, it appears that the schools of the metropolis have received of this sum, £7,118. 1s. 7d., and the remaining £21,586. 1s., or three-fourths of the whole, have been applied for the benefit of schools in other parts of our own country, in the British colonies, and in foreign lands; a statement which shews that the benefits of the Union are not merely local, but are felt wherever a necessity exists for their exercise.

In thus reviewing the origin and progress of the Sunday School Union, it is impossible not to feel that this

Institution has an important mission to discharge in connexion with the various efforts making for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom. It has always been one of those delightful associations where the symbols of parties are unknown, and love to the Divine Redeemer, is found to be an adequate bond of union. Long may it so continue! The preceding narrative has shewn the varied character of the duties devolving on the Union, in connexion with the extension and improvement of the Sunday school system, and the committees, upon whom from time to time the management of the Institution has rested, have felt no difficulty in discharging those duties, although assembled from various sections of the christian church, and holding, on some points, very different sentiments—but they love as brethren; and they do not find these differences of views any hindrance in the way of their uniting most cordially in efforts to train up the rising youth of our land in the fear of the Lord. In the review of the past, there is much that affords encouragement; it is a token for good, that God has put it into the hearts of Sabbath school labourers, from time to time, to sit down, and enquire prayerfully, whether our schools are as useful as they should be, and if not, where is the deficiency, and how can it be supplied. The increasing interest taken by the christian church in these Institutions is very cheering; it is a new thing to witness, as we have recently done, the representatives of the churches listening attentively to lengthened discourses on subjects connected with the practical working of the Sunday school system, and employing much valuable time in discussions upon

the suggestions presented to their attention. The periodical press has caught the feeling, and their pages are being devoted to the consideration of questions which would not, in past years, have been thought sufficiently important to occupy the attention of their readers. Nothing but good can be anticipated from these events; Sunday schools only occupy their proper place when they are considered as an important part of the church's agency, in carrying forward the evangelization of the world; a result which will be mainly secured, by their having the sympathy, guidance, and influence, of the pastors enlisted on their behalf. And much cause is there that christian churches should avail themselves of every opportunity for maintaining the importance of an enlightened acquaintance with the word of God! In various directions are efforts being made to cultivate a religious feeling amongst the people, but in too many cases, it is to be feared, the religious feeling thus excited, will rest in an attention to outward forms, without any influence being exerted on the heart. Under whatever name this may be done, the result must be most alarming to the spiritual and eternal interests of man. The labours of the pious, devoted, intelligent teacher, form one of the most effectual correctives to this evil. His text-book is the whole uncorrupted word of God; he studies it with his scholars, under the conviction which he communicates to them, that it is not only their privilege, but their duty, to seek to know the mind of the Spirit in that word; that the state of the heart is a matter of supreme importance, and that no one can safely rest his opinion or his practice on any

thing short of the revealed will of God. What ~~hears~~ will such instructions bring into our congregations! and what members, under the Divine blessing, will thus be added to our churches! Many of them will occupy high places; all will be useful in the station which God may assign them. Such considerations invest the teacher's office with high responsibilities. Sunday school teachers must not fail to look steadily at their work in all its anticipated results, and to exercise unwavering faith in its adaptation to the spiritual wants of our times. This will render them self-denying, laborious, and successful. It is well observed by a philosophic statesman of a neighbouring country, in his sketch of the life of Washington, "Weakness of conduct is but the consequence of weakness of conviction; for the strongest of all the springs of human action, is human belief." With such a spirit of faith, and holy determination, should Sunday school teachers go forth to their work, feeling their own insufficiency and imperfection, yet relying on the influence of the Divine spirit; thus will they overcome every obstacle to their efforts, and realize the anticipation of the psalmist, when he breathed his devout aspiration, "That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace." Then will the church join with teachers, in exclaiming with the same inspired writer, "Happy is that people that is in such a case, yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord."







